SELF HELP FOR NERVOUS WOMEN

BY

JOHN K. MITCHELL, M.D.

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SELF HELP
FOR NERVOUS WOMEN

"Endue my body with such measure of health as may suffice it for the obeying of the Spirit, that I may pass the day unhindered and in quietness—."

ARISTIDES (*Pater's translation*)

"The priests of Æsculapius . . . were far from taking a materialistic view of the Soul. They supplemented the notion that an unsound mind can be cured through the body by another to which they attached every importance, *i.e.* that the sound mind can and should completely control the sound body."

DYER. *The gods in Greece.*

SELF HELP FOR NERVOUS WOMEN

FAMILIAR TALKS ON ECONOMY IN NERVOUS EXPENDITURE

BY

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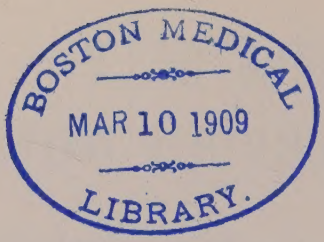

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Electrotyped and printed by J. B. Lippincott Company
The Washington Square Press, Philadelphia, U. S. A.

PREFACE

At the suggestion of the Editor of *Harper's Bazar* I wrote in 1901 a series of short articles partly as advice to nervous women, partly as counsel to those who were in danger of becoming nervous.

The many letters received during and after their publication indicated an interest which has led to the expansion and rewriting of the brief papers then published, incorporating some of the suggestions and answering some of the questions of those correspondents. The familiar style has been retained, as it seemed the easiest and most direct way of getting into personal relation with the readers.

Much of the advice may be criti-

cised as old; if so it is none the worse for having stood the test of time and service. Indeed all good advice is old, and no newer than good conduct or the necessity for it.

The book is not intended for doctors and it has been my endeavor to avoid touching upon matters purely medical; also I have tried to make distinct the limits beyond which the best self help would indicate that a physician's aid should be sought.

The address is chiefly to women because they form the larger number of sufferers from functional nervous disease, but in most instances if the pronouns were changed the lessons would apply as well to men. The hygiene of nervousness is not very different in the two sexes though the causes of nervousness may vary widely.

It is hoped that the families and friends of the nervous will find in these pages information which will help them materially in their relations with the sufferers from nervous disorders and teach them the best way to help, control and comfort, it may be even to cure.

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SELF HELP FOR NERVOUS WOMEN

I.

OF NERVOUSNESS IN GENERAL—DEFINITIONS OF NERVOUSNESS AND OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM—MANIFESTATIONS AND CAUSES OF NERVOUSNESS.

IN order that it may be understood at the start what the aims of this little book are and its necessary limitations, some sort of definition must be made of what is meant by "nervousness." The word is a comparatively modern one and the dictionaries explain it in a manner scarcely more definite than its ordinary loose and vague acceptation. Any physician who has much to do with nervous people has constantly to ask his patients to state clearly what they mean by describing their

disorder as nervousness. It is not only by patients that it is misapplied, for doctors themselves often use it so as to include whole classes of diseases to which it has only the relation of a symptom. The more precise sounding term *neurasthenia* which is sometimes used as its equivalent is of even more recent coinage but it is employed in the same loose way. It would be better if " nervousness " were used only to describe ordinary general manifestations of the every-day sort and " neurasthenia " with its many complications applied to conditions in which the nervous symptoms amount to a disease, or rather a disorder.

Neurasthenia

The neurologist has patients sent to him daily to whose cases, partly

from a desire not to alarm the sufferer or the family, partly from a lack of exact knowledge, a label of "neurasthenia" has been attached without any other warrant than that they are undoubtedly "nervous"—but nervous as a secondary symptom of other disease, nervous, mental or general. To quote a personal experience, in my note-books of the past year are found cases described by the physicians referring them as "neurasthenias" among which are several varieties of insanity, some of them actual wild mania, others of beginning softening of the brain, of melancholia, of hysteria, and not a few which turned out on examination to be well-defined forms of clearly marked organic disease such as cancer, Bright's disease, heart disease and catarrh of the intestines. "Ner-

vous exhaustion" and "nervous prostration" are other phrases which are misused and misapplied. Strictly speaking they are more rare and more serious conditions and the words should not be used as if they were synonyms for mere fatigue—but they are constantly thus employed. A case of real nervous exhaustion may be so bad as to render the patient unable to exert so much nerve-force as is needed to walk up stairs but one hears a person who is merely rather tired and irritable announce with unction that he has nervous exhaustion. A woman, obviously in no very desperate state, told me she had had nervous prostration. Supposing this had been some time since, she was asked how long it lasted. "Oh, I had it yesterday before dinner." If she had not picked up this sort of half

medical slang and had been content to describe the state she had been in "yesterday before dinner" in another sort of slang as "a bit jumpy" she would have come nearer to an accurate representation of her state.

Definition of Nervousness

With these reservations and exceptions, let us attempt a definition of nervousness which shall be sufficient to cover such conditions as may afterward properly be considered in an untechnical way. Nervousness, speaking largely, is either a condition of morbid excitability of the nervous system or an imperfect control by the nervous system of the performance of its functions, or a union of these two states in varying proportions.

The source of such conditions in an individual instance may be mental or bodily enfeeblement from some cause or more rarely may arise from a single disturbance of the kind we call a "shock." Usually there exists a combination of several causes, acting together or in succession. For example, a woman has to nurse in serious illness, for a long time, a relative whom she loves: thus two causes are supplied, hard work, with fatigue and anxiety, and often a third cause is added by the necessity of the case making her take her meals irregularly and hurriedly. Should she then have a small illness herself or some slight physical injury, prepared by her previous exhaustion and poor nourishment to be an easy prey, she falls into the grip of "nervousness." As a curious instance of

the second kind of cause, namely a single shock, I recall the case of a robust, unimaginative young Irishman who at the funeral of a relative slipped into the grave. He was ill for a year or more with every manifestation of excitability, timidity, apprehension, indecision, tearfulness —a condition in fact which in a girl would have been described as hysterical nervousness.

What is the "nervous system" which seems to be the seat of such troubles? Another definition is here called for to make matters clear before proceeding further. The brain, the spinal cord and the nerves that originate from them, together constitute the nervous system of the body. Higher functions are controlled by the brain—namely, those acts which need will and nice attention, and also

the purely mental operations. The lower, automatic or habitual, performances of our bodies are governed either by centres in the spinal cord or by nerve centres (ganglions) closely related to it. Over many such acts, although ordinarily they are done without conscious attention, the brain retains control or can assume control, so that they may be performed consciously or be altogether inhibited, one might say vetoed, by the brain.

Some, no doubt, are born nervous —that is with an imperfect or one-sided development of the nervous system, which lessens its ability to perform its tasks. To some, nervousness comes as a result of their own folly, or the misconducting of their lives; for some it is an unavoidable consequence of the sins of others, or

of bearing the burdens of others. The first and the last of these classes are the ones most in need of help and counsel. It is the morally and mentally controllable that can be cured; whether the control be exercised from within or from without is of less moment than that control is possible. To such one may speak with some hope of bringing aid; to the foolish the tongues of men and angels alike cry in vain. But what is important to our present purpose is not the description of a condition which though difficult to define precisely is, nevertheless, a pretty well-recognized one, but the comprehension of the very vital and less generally understood fact that *nervousness is a symptom, not a disease in itself.**

* I am well aware that in rare instances "nervousness" in an exact sense is so marked and serious a matter and other symptoms so insignificant that it

The disease or disorder, the original "causing cause" of the nervousness, may be very remote, may be mental, moral, or physical, but to treat the resulting symptom with any fair promise of success we have to seek out this source of trouble and remove it.

Manifestations of Nervousness

Before we concern ourselves with how this is to be done, let us look for a moment at the manifestations of nervous disorder. What are the earliest recognizable signals of danger? Perhaps the commonest early symptom of approaching trouble is the difficulty of concentrating or continuing attention. Next as heralds, are apt to appear unreasonable ir-

may be properly considered a disorder by itself. But as a general rule and for such degrees of nervousness as can come within the scope of our consideration in such a book as this, the statement is true as it stands.

ritability of temper and an impairment in the perception of the relative importance of things, so that trifles are regarded as matters of life and death moment, and the smallest ordinary affairs of daily life present themselves as absolutely insupportable burdens. Soon physical changes are perceived—tremulousness, fits of causeless crying, restlessness, fatigue upon the slightest exertion. Not to go on with details of what may follow, we may pause here a moment to consider this matter of too easy tiring—a highly characteristic attendant symptom of states of general nervousness, and one which, when thoroughly comprehended, probably explains a good deal.

An excessive fatigue from moderate exertion is often found in persons who to all appearance are in good

muscular condition. They can make strong single or brief exertions, but cannot continue to apply their forces. The weakness lies not in the muscles but in the nerve-centres that control them, which are too readily exhausted. The essential difficulty is in the nutrition of these nerve-centres and the fatigue experienced is only a sign of it. If the trouble has gone so far as to become chronic, so that the sufferer wakes tired, gets up tired, and goes tired all day, something more serious in the way of treatment is needed than can be suggested in an article like this, or carried out at home. We are to concern ourselves with those only who are drifting toward such conditions or affected with them in minor degrees. As to this last described condition of perpetual fatigue, it should be added that such a

state is sometimes the only symptom of a nervous disturbance and may exist as a simple "asthenia," a weakness, that is, without any further manifestations of nervousness.

It has already been said that some are born nervous and some have nervousness thrust upon them. In the former class, education and proper environment in youth will do what can be done to prevent the development of trouble. The care and bringing up of children with these tendencies must be considered later. Let us occupy ourselves now with the causes producing nervousness—causes often avoidable or controllable, could they but be recognized early enough.

Causes of Nervousness

The doctor classifies the causes of disease into "predisposing" and

"exciting" causes, phrases easily explained. For example, anything which lowers the general health will act as a *predisposing* cause of a contagious disease, while the actual material germ or microbe is the *exciting* cause, which, received into a body in poor condition, meets with little resistance to its attack and develops without the obstacles which strong vitality would place in its way.

The predisposing causes of nervousness are oftenest mental, the exciting causes oftenest physical; but this is a rule with exceptions. In nervous disorders we have to reckon, too, with predispositions due to character and temperament and these are very important. Some of the conspicuous and peculiar virtues of woman may, if unguided and undisciplined, become sources of trouble in

one inclined to nervousness. Her strong affections and sympathy lead her often into emotional excesses; her unselfishness drives her into giving up necessary rest or sleep or diversion. Emotional excess, whether spent in grief, love, hate, or ambition, is the most extravagant form of nervous expenditure and, if unchecked, soon results in bankruptcy.

On the other hand, the monotony of occupation, the lack of varied intellectual interests, the continual or exclusive occupation with the small and uninspiring details of domestic management which characterize the lives led by many women, bring about nervousness, or help the development of nervousness in a different way. A woman bound down to work of this kind grows to exaggerate the importance of trifles, is apt to cultivate

worries, and to end, at best, in losing her sense of mental and moral perspective, exaggerating small faults of her own or others into crimes. She is likely, too, as happens in any one secluded from larger interests or wider contact with the world, to permit her own views and personal peculiarities to grow until they reach an awkward size and strength and become difficult to manage.

When such predisposing causes as those enumerated—emotional indulgence, monotony of life, tendencies to worry, extravagant feelings about small things—have acted long enough, let them be followed by a sharp physical shock, like an acute illness, or a long strain of work, or, most potent of all, by a combination of mental anxiety with hard bodily work, such as is entailed in nursing

some one dear to her, with the usual accompaniment of irregular hours, loss of sleep, and hasty meals at odd times, and we have a combination which will almost certainly result in serious nervous breakdown.

The exciting causes of nervousness are, however, often so small that they appear ridiculous, even impossible, to one who ignores the previous long preparation which made possible the final catastrophe. If you stand on slippery ground at the very edge of a precipice, it will not take much of a push to send you over, nor will you hit any less hard on the rocks at the bottom because it was a slight shove that upset you. As an example, a woman getting out of bed stepped on a pin and was six months recovering from the neurasthenic condition which followed;

but she had been ten years getting ready for it. Another instance recently under my observation was that of a lady who found the exciting cause of a long illness in the fact that her husband had insisted on buying for her, in preparation for a summer holiday, a dress which she thought costly beyond his means. She worried and fretted and fussed about it until she ended in a state of nervous depression, which she was a twelvemonth getting over.

When some of the early premonitory symptoms of nervousness appear, what can be done to stop their further increase is our next question. Whether they have newly taken possession of the patient or are the slow growth of years, the answer will be much the same. The differences in the plan of attack will depend upon

whether the threats are against the nervous or the physical side.

Symptoms of Nervousness

Let us recapitulate the symptoms, some or all of which may occur. First, upon the mental side (or nervous—the nerves and the mind are part of one system), there have been mentioned irritability, a tendency toward emotional excess, such as too ready tears, too easy fatigue upon use of the mind, extravagant expressions of feeling about trifles, inability to decide small questions without unduly long consideration and reconsideration and difficulty in concentrating thought. With or without these or some of them, the victim may observe certain physical symptoms—constant fatigue or fatigue out of proportion to the work done,

tremulousness, uneasy or too brief sleep, general restlessness, and many vague pains. Both lists might be extended to an unconscionable length if one tried to make them complete. It is, indeed, characteristic of troubles of a nervous as distinguished from those of an organic kind, that they present this bewildering complexity and variety of small disorders of function or sensation. It is often on this very infinity and contradictory mingling of symptoms that the doctor founds his diagnosis; and while the patient usually insists that each and every one of them has its separate origin and needs distinct treatment, the physician knows well that all are but branches from one root, that each physical woe, fancied or real, is to be traced to some wrong method of ordering her life and ex-

pending her strength. It should be noticed, too, that all these symptoms are rather alterations or exaggerations of normal conditions than wholly abnormal manifestations, that is they represent disorder of function, not disease; they are signals of danger, disregard of which may mean wreck. Like most early signs of disease they are natural warnings of something wrong. Fatigue and pain are usually hints for rest. That a broken bone hurts is not a meaningless isolated fact—it is Doctor Nature's way of ordering that the injured part shall be kept still. If that combination of physical and mental equilibrium which we call good temper is disturbed, the balance must be restored by rest, by the absence of strain. And so with the other alterations described, each has an appro-

priate remedy or one would better say each has a cause which must be found and removed to allow repair or recovery.

Religion and Suggestion

So much has of late been said about the cure by suggestion, by mental influence, religious or non-religious, of nervous diseases that it is worth while to call attention to and emphasize more strongly the share that physical conditions have in bringing about nervousness. No one except fanatics and ignorant enthusiasts will pretend that all physical conditions can be changed by mental means. If the contention that bodily ailments or deficiencies play a large part in producing nervousness is correct — a belief held by all those who have seen most of such disorders—it is

obvious that mental means of healing will be as insufficient against them as against the consequences of starvation. The analogy is indeed a very good one, since many times undernourishment, *i.e.,* starvation in some degree, of the nervous system is the basic difficulty. Neither belief nor prayer, suggestion, encouragement nor hypnotism will replace food, or satisfy the demands of the nerves for better nutrition. Faith, hope, confidence of recovery, Christian patience, may aid, will aid, in lessening the suffering, will assist the sufferer to bear the inevitable ills while the necessary help is sought, the needed treatment given, but they cannot by themselves effect the cure which must be brought about by the commonplace, simple, unromantic means of food, rest and self-control.

Let whoever is beginning to find herself the victim of some of these mutinous manifestations against the good order and discipline of mind or body start without delay to do what is possible to remove the causes.

How to do this will be the subject of the next chapter.

II.

PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NERVOUS SYMPTOMS—EXAGGERATED EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION—HOW TO CONTROL ONE'S SELF—IMPORTANCE OF HABIT—OF OCCUPATION—OF VARIED INTERESTS.

How to lessen, to control, to abolish if possible the causes of nervousness—this is the problem for solution: not how to lessen nervousness merely, for it must be repeated that *that* is mainly a symptom and only one symptom of a disorder of complex and widespread distant origin.

Before nervousness has been established and become a habit is the time to attack it. Once it has got possession, more severe measures must be taken to eject it—and advice will have to wait until the war is over. "To read the riot act to a mob of emotions is valueless, and he who is wise will choose a more wholesome hour

for his exhortations. Before and after are the preacher's hopeful occasions, not the moment when excitement is at the highest and the self-control we seek to get help from at its lowest ebb."

The woman who suffers from nervousness and wishes to control it must try to study for herself her life, habits, environment, temperament, in order to discover whence the trouble springs. Oftenest some departure from proper ways of physical living will be found to be the starting-point. It may have been unavoidable when it occurred, or have been thought so at least, or more likely not thought about at all until the mischief was done.

If this be the case, the physical needs have to be studied and the possible causes of trouble considered in

turn and in their relation to the consequences, a feat seldom to be achieved for one's self, but calling for the wisdom of an outsider, and one too who has no interest or affection involved. In the next chapter the needs of such conditions will be taken up. In this one we are to discuss treatment of the earlier and more easily handled symptoms, especially those which may be checked or wholly done away with by one's own efforts.

Excessive Emotional Expression

One of the most frequent predisposing causes of nervousness is a habit of yielding too easily to the expression of all and any emotion, or of cultivating to excess the outward manifestation of feeling. Few things will insure more certainly a future

disastrous result upon the character than this, and yet there are many women who account it to themselves for virtue or consider it sweet and feminine and attractive to do so. Tears for trifling pains, or loud complaints about small annoyances—physical, social, or what not—may give at first momentary relief to the weeper, but soon grow into habits which weaken the power of self-control and lessen the possibility of endurance in all forms. It is not within the ability of every woman to suppress absolutely all manifestations of suffering; it is surely within the power of every one to make up her mind—and to teach her children—to endure the smaller inevitable woes of existence without an outcry, and thus aid in the acquisition of control over larger forms of trouble.

To yield and yield again to extravagant emotion is weak-minded—and leads to more weak-mindedness—and weakens bodily endurance too. Every one in this trouble-full world will some day have need of all possible native and acquired courage wherewith to face an enemy, whether that enemy come from within or without. Let it be cultivated early and always. There can be no disaster, moral, physical, or financial, so great but that courage, reason, and the power to use one's head coolly will help us to encounter, perhaps to conquer it, at worst to endure it bravely. Whether the suffering is of mind or body, the one who can stand it without wasting her strength in making useless noise has the possibility, almost the certainty, of being able to lessen it by distracting her mind, by

diverting her own attention and seizing all means to aid her in the struggle.

All this must not be taken as advice against reasonable expression of feeling. For many people, and at some times for any person, to attempt the total suppression of all outward manifestation of grief, anger, or irritation has the same kind of undesirable result as tying down the safety valve of the boiler. The steam blows off noisily from the valve perhaps—but to let it do so saves it from exploding elsewhere in a far more dangerous way. The whole American tendency is to over-expression of the most trivial feelings, or perhaps I should rather say, to regard trivialities as of too much importance, and it is not very probable that any advice will lead to too complete a repression

and consequent danger of boiling over at the wrong time.

Since the first publication of these papers a friend has written me some criticisms of the counsel to repress emotional expression, which are printed at the end of this chapter because they add interesting personal statements about the effect of too great or too complete self-repression. But again it should be repeated that the reasonable expression of natural feelings is not what one desires to suppress. The advice given was meant for the folk who cry when a plate is broken, who shriek and scream when they are angry, weep copiously when the canary bird is ill, and go into hysterics when the baby has stomach-ache—for those, in short, who indulge in orgies of emotional dissipation.

Causes and Consequences of Emotion

Lange and James have formulated the theory that an emotion is the result of its appropriate physical expression. This at first sight seems a mere paradox—to say for example that a girl is bashful because she blushes, that a man is afraid because he trembles—seems merely ridiculous to any one but a student of psychology. But not to go into the long argument necessary to support this contention, is it not true in every one's experience to a certain extent? Take as an instance the shock of fear: there is a momentary stop, then a palpitating of the heart, rapid or gasping breathing, chill or even sweating—all or some of these outward expressions of the emotion usually occurring before the sense of alarm is felt by the brain. This is

the case with most emotions, at any rate with the sudden emotional disturbances, and all follow the same course, the perception first, "motor reactions" next (*i.e.,* palpitation, rapid respiration, chill, etc., in the instance above), then, and not till then, the feeling proper to the outward expression. The possibility that such a view can be held is at least suggestive, for although we may not be able to control or abolish a feeling we can do something towards lessening its expression in action.

Proof of this theory to a certain extent may be had by experiments upon one's own feelings. It is safe to assert that if one frowns and assumes an attitude of anger, a certain sense of annoyance if not a stronger sensation will be experienced. Try on the other hand to put

on a smiling expression and observe if a sense of pleasure or merriment does not follow.

These things are capable of perhaps stronger demonstration if a hypnotized subject be used. If in a person in that condition one presses the brows into a frown, this artificial assumption of the appearance of anger is apt to call forth other signs of that passion—showing certainly that the emotion corresponding to the expression may be produced by the involuntary expression in the features of the look and movement suitable to the feeling.

A hypnotized person, it is true, is morbidly accessible to suggestion—but so to a less degree is any one of sensitive nervous organization. The moment such a person yields to the outward visible expression of emotion

it seems to re-enforce, to make less controllable the morbid state. To give way therefore upon small occasion to extravagant expression of feeling is to put in danger the whole mechanism of self-restraint. Certainly whether the theory be true or not, it will be found to furnish ground for reasonable working practice in the control of excessive or abnormal displays of emotion. Panic terror—that horrible fear of the unknown, unnamable something, as real and as unreal as the night terrors of children, is a not uncommon symptom with sensitive neurasthenic patients. Yielding to it means that it becomes master and totally unfits its victim for normal living: fighting against it is difficult by reason of the very vagueness which makes it so terrifying. But try bluffing—put on a brave

smiling aspect, "Assume a virtue if you have it not" and with every effort made the dragon becomes less alarming until full control of the feeling has been gained.

One important means is physical quiet, relaxation, not the tension of every muscle, which is commonly and wrongly held to be the way to fight against a hurt. Bodily relaxation is one step and often the most helpful one toward securing mental—*i.e.*, nervous, ease, just as a person who slips and falls is less apt to be injured if falling relaxed. The reverse is also true, that bodily tension increases mental strain. If, for example, you find yourself tremulous, or with shaking hands from excitement or apprehension, the tremor will be much more effectively overcome by relaxing the affected muscles, or the whole

body, than by stiffening up and "bracing yourself" against it; and the corresponding nervous relief is far greater.

This is the attitude to be sought for; the philosophy of it is plain enough to any thinking person. If it is not clear to you, try the experiment a few times for yourself. The trick of it is not to be acquired in a day or week, but it can be learned, and should be striven for at all times until attained and fixed as a habit.

Hysterics

In hysterical attacks the method is still more successful—in suitable cases. "Hysterics" are by no means the exclusive prerogative of the weak and the silly, nor is any advice of much use to these classes, which need more active measures. But when a

strong woman (or man for that matter) has been brought low by disease and some long and heavy nervous strain, it is far from uncommon to see such a one develop old-fashioned "hysterics" as a result of the condition of irritable weakness to which the nervous system has been reduced. Even with the foolish patient, though advice is wasted, strict and stern commands may sometimes be heeded. The "motor reactions," the outward and visible signs of hysteria, are largely in the voluntary muscles and consist as every one knows in convulsive movements, shrieking, laughing or crying—and almost without exception the attacks begin with rapid, shallow breathing, often irregular or sobbing in character. This is the point to strike at. Insist, command, deep-breathing, to be kept up until the re-

laxation arrives which indicates the end of the seizures for the time. The good old prescription of a dash of cold water into the face or upon the chest of the hysteric, probably acts by inducing deep-breathing. Some attacks of hysteria are beyond such methods, but many will be found amenable to them.

Not only pain but half the ills that may befall one are multiplied infinitely by expectation and attention. The worst part of pain is often in anticipation and recollection.

Courage and Custom

It is not always the pain itself that damages, but rather the consequences of pain; and it is against these that we have to provide an armor of habit, against these that we must make ready all available weapons. Pain, sorrow,

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trouble—are not these the lot of all? It is to be remembered, too, that pain is more necessarily part of the life of women than of men, many of whom go through a long existence without any serious suffering. To bear resolutely what cannot be escaped, to refuse to cease from duties or to lay aside one's interests at the command of pain will surely make it easier to bear, may even shorten its duration. It is true in the moral sphere as it is in the action of the body that the burden which, once laid down, we cannot lift again to our shoulders may be easily carried if we support it standing upright and moving steadily onward, and still better if we have custom to help us.

The attitude of mind toward worries should be something like that described above for the body in respect

of bearing pain. Worries are like crumbs in bed—the more you wriggle the worse they scratch you! People with well-established nervousness may not be able to rid themselves of worries, but we are speaking now of the earlier stages. When a woman begins to find that she cannot shake off minor cares, troubles and apprehensions, it is time for action, for this is an almost certain indication of beginning trouble. Let her examine into the matter with a little cool consideration.

Analysis will often discover as the fundamental difficulty a sort of derangement of moral perspective. Trifles have come to occupy the foreground so completely that they obscure or altogether hide the larger and more important things beyond them. This is often because trifles do

really and naturally occupy too large a share of her daily attention. The application of a little reasoning power to the consideration of such matters will, if the trouble be not too far advanced, reduce things to something like their proper relation. Meet worries with common sense:—

"Fling but a stone, the giant dies."

Decision

Many nervous folk can at once for the time get rid of their apprehension by telling some one, from whom they readily and faithfully receive assurance of the unimportance of their fears. You should try to become your own adviser in this respect and conscientiously take your own advice. Learn to put yourself in a detached attitude; be watchful for the approach of worries, of a cause of

irritability or panic or groundless distress. Met with calmness, they may usually be put aside without affecting the nerves. If you have a decision to make, examine the grounds for it, of course, then make it—and stick to it when made. In the treatment of cases of advanced nervousness, to insist upon patients doing this is sometimes the only way to help them out of the slough in which they flounder, considering and reconsidering troubles of no moment,—making a great splash, but not advancing towards firm ground. Quite often no other treatment is needed to put an end to the difficulty. Having once settled a matter of small importance, let no temptation induce you to take it into your thought again, not even if you find or believe you have judged wrong. You would

do better, under the circumstances, to let it go, even if it be some detriment to you, than to start its examination over again. You should not let yourself begin to make questions of conscience out of nothing any more than you would encourage fears of trifling physical dangers by dwelling upon them. "In counsel," Lord Bacon says in one of his essays, "it is good to see dangers and in execution not to see them, except they be very great."

Indecision

When you feel these storms of indecision, they must be faced—not fled from. Consider the facts: look people and things squarely in the face. Take into consideration without flinching from them all the facts, good and bad. Give up something

if you must, but remember you cannot both have and not have, cannot in the homely phrase "keep your cake and eat it too." Then without undue reconsideration select your course of action, and having chosen steer on that course no matter how the wind blows, even though second thought advise a different choice. Morally in such cases, a mistaken decision bravely held to is better than vacillation—and it is better in the end to have chosen wrong than to have hesitated and run this way and that until no way seemed practicable. Of course we are speaking of choice in merely material matters, not of choice between right and wrong.

Put away vain analysis and weak regret and self-reproaches as idle and empty follies. If you have decided wrong, abstain from com-

plaint even to yourself but above all abstain from the relaxation of confiding your difficulties, doubts and fears to others. Abstain for two reasons: First, because such confessions will not as a rule help you, but rather be likely to suggest new doubts, and second because however polite and interested your listener may seem, no one can really be concerned for another about such trivialities—and you had better remember beforehand that the hearer will be bored.

In short again, courage is the first of virtues—and courage at its best is a solitary virtue.

To finish the consideration of the symptoms threatening trouble from the nervous side, it may be added that the others in the list, namely, difficulty in concentrating attention, imperfect memory, and fatigue of mind

coming too soon upon study or intellectual effort, are matters of somewhat greater seriousness. The sufferer from any or all of them is usually convinced that they represent permanent impairment of mind and often states to the physician that they indicate approaching insanity. This is not true, however; they do indicate the temporary impairment of the brain's ability to do its work, but no more necessarily mean its destruction than a sprained ankle means that the leg will drop off. What they call loudly for is rest; and if they have not gone too far, this may be enough to restore the nerves to useful activity. In some instances to change the form of labor which has caused the fatigue will be enough; in others to lessen the hours of work will suffice.

These symptoms are really scarcely separable. They are, in fact, but several manifestations of one condition. On being analyzed they will be found to have their basis in the lack of ability to hold the mind to one subject, a defect, that is, in power of attention. The subject of the moment not having been well grasped originally on account of this enfeebled power of attention, when the effort to recall it is made it cannot be revived vividly or accurately. This is described and felt as a failure of memory.

A Quiet Hour

A wise precaution for women not strong, and a measure of great value and helpfulness for anyone who exhibits tendencies to nervous breakdown or has cause to fear such an effect is

to have an hour or two of absolute physical quiet and peace daily at a fixed time. It may be hard to arrange this but it is less troublesome than a long illness! Insist that between certain hours you shall be totally undisturbed by visitors, servants, household questions, or any need less serious than the house's being on fire. If you need physical rest, get it then; if you only want peace and time to regain disturbed balance, the retirement may be made profitable with a book, but do not take this time for cleaning up neglected duties; let it be understood and used as a period of freedom from all care. If more repose than this is necessary, an hour after the midday meal is a good time to choose. Whichever of these is done, it is most important that punctuality and regularity in it should be observed.

Let it be most clearly and emphatically said that the hour thus set aside must not be used as a time for clearing one's desk, for finishing delayed work, in short for duties or labors, but kept sacredly for rest of body and mind. How best to seek such rest is a matter depending on the conditions of the person and the day. It may be merely physical repose that is needed; it may be mental quiet with the assurance already insisted upon that no interruption will occur. Those who make a habit of this quiet hour as a measure of self-protection, even those who are not nervous, will find in it varied possibilities of usefulness. For instance in people who are not of worrying disposition or overgiven to self-consideration, this undisturbed time offers opportunity for calm examination of one's self,

for arraying and judging of acts and motives and the settlement of the innumerable insistent questions which must have cool and calm attention for their best solution.

The Contemplative Life

Here too lies a great opportunity for the cultivation of the contemplative side of life—not that hours of time are required for that, but that to have a set and certain period for contemplation, or for reading of a thoughtful or suggestive sort, is important. It fixes a little oasis of calm in the mad hurry of our modern excited life. A book of the kind that conduces to or demands of one intellectual consideration, is the best companion whether it be poetic, philosophic or contemplative. Books that are good enough to bear, nay to

beg, re-reading till they become old friends are the ones to choose and to find new helps and new beauties at each reading. It is a good test of the quality of poetry or philosophic thought or what may be called religious philosophy to improve with repetition—a test which will be well borne by Wordsworth or Milton's poetry, the works of Marcus Aurelius, the Imitation of Christ, William Penn's Fruits of Solitude—not to speak of such books of the Bible as come under our description, Job, Isaiah, the Psalms.

Prevention of Nervousness

This consideration of symptoms and their treatment has led us a little away from the main subject, the prevention of nervousness. Enough has been said about the causes to suggest some of the remedies.

I said that often one cause of nervousness lay in the dull mechanical routine of household work and management, work unvarying in kind and for many people uninteresting, involving many small annoyances and constant struggle with untaught and unteachable servants. Since this cannot be done away with, every endeavor must be made to supply new interests in such lives. According to age, tastes, habits, or capacity, these may be physical or intellectual occupations—or both. Active physical exercise is a good corrective for ordinary nervous irritability. A sharp walk, moving springily, not a dawdle, is more advantageous in every way than a long dull stroll. If the weather is bad enough to give one a sense of overcoming opposition in facing wind and rain, so much the

better. If for any reason you cannot get out, open a window and do ten minutes of quick active gymnastic movements with full breathing, in the freshest air available. It does not much matter what the motions are, so that they be rapid and use a variety of muscles.

To acquire an interesting hobby or two and to ride them pretty hard is another and more lasting form of help. To raise chickens and pigeons may be made amusing and profitable, if you raise good ones of known and valued breeds. The supply of guinea-pigs is never equal to the demand! To make your own garden is a delightful occupation, but do not let it be a mere matter of seeding and weeding. Try for the finest flowers, or by selection and breeding to fix a new color in a familiar flower, or

study cross-fertilizing of plants. The other day a charming lady told me that no hand but her own had touched her garden for two years except for the spring digging and that she had hybridized two thousand carnations in the previous season.

The immense interest of a camera, well used, and the fascination of developing and printing your own negatives, every one will admit who has experienced it. Here again more is to be had out of it by studying new methods of doing old things, or finding things altogether new to do, than by pursuing worn paths. Interest will soon be lost if you limit your efforts to the usual caricatures of your friends—but think what endless opportunities may be found in the flowers by the wayside. A series of pictures of a plant or a tree at inter-

vals of a week from the bare branches of spring through leaf-making, blossom-time and fruitage to the splendid death of autumn, would make occupation for a whole season. The bicycle, golf, tennis, and all the range of field-sports, of course suggest themselves, but these class rather as diversions than occupations. Their place in the cultivation of the body cannot be discussed here, though we must turn next to the physical means of preventing nervousness.

The strongest are the least nervous: a nervous system well fed with good red blood is little liable to suffer seriously from any but the worst and most unavoidable causes of nervousness. If a person's tendencies by temperament or inheritance are toward nervousness, then to be well fed, at regular hours, to sleep suffi-

ciently, to take a daily cold bath, to get enough active exercise in the open air—if possible in a form which will add interest to the mere exertion—these should be the commandments of the physical law.

About the moral aspects I seem already to have said so much, I am ashamed to repeat my counsels. Recognize early and suppress extravagant feelings about trifles; discourage undue expression of emotions of all kinds; meet worries tranquilly; make decisions without over-consideration; and remember that although you must to some extent be examining yourself to do these things successfully, you must most of all and always not get too much wrapped up in your symptoms.

These are commonplace counsels, are they not? Perhaps they are—but do you follow them?

NOTE.—On page 42 it was said that a friend and former patient had written some criticisms of my advice against too free expression of feelings. This letter is so interesting that it is here added almost in full.

"While reading your papers on 'Self Help for Nervous Women,' a few thoughts were suggested to me which might be of use to a class of women of whom you do not speak. I mean that class who do *not* give way to their feelings enough, women to whom it would be a relief if they could give way to them, but long repression of all outward expression has made this impossible. If tears have ever come to their relief, they have been tears of blood. Girls who have been brought up on Quaker or Puritan plan too early learn to control their emotions and even to feel a certain pride in never allowing any one to have a suspicion of what they are suffering. An almost perfect control of feature even is acquired more or less unconsciously. I speak feelingly, being myself one of these unfortunates who have suffered in silence all my life until I broke down under the strain. At rare times they can express their feelings, but generally they find it impossible although they would give worlds to be able to utter their thoughts, and as to tears—I can best describe by Mrs. Browning's lines what they suffer:

'Go weep for those whose eyes are dry
What time their hearts have bled.'

"For this habit of unnatural repression Nature must take her revenge sooner or later and a time comes when these strong self-controlled women find their emotions will no longer be controlled. There must be an outlet. Happy are they if they have

been wisely brought up and taught to look at life as Marcus Aurelius did, or, still better, if they are strong church-women, who can derive comfort from the practice of their duties. If a girl's religious training has been based upon 'Line upon Line,' 'Precept upon Precept,' Watt's Hymns, Hannah More, Mrs. Barbauld and Maria Edgeworth, in other words, the old-fashioned plan, a stronger moral than religious feeling has been developed, and unless brought up in a Church where there is some outward expression of religious feeling, her emotions find no vent.

"Too much self-control leads to as disastrous results as too little, but there is more hope of recovery in the former case because the power of self-control can be reëstablished more easily in later life than gained for the first time. A complete breakdown is, however, almost the only hope in such cases.

"As to the means of the prevention of such wrecks: Avoid unnecessary self-control; give way to natural emotions; accept sympathy; do not feel pride in bearing troubles without human help; accepted sympathy helps others as well as yourself—'whose hearts have bled what time their eyes were dry.' Tears are natural—it is false shame to mind giving way to them *at proper times.* They relieve nervous tension. A time comes when one would give her right hand to be able to express her feelings or seek sympathy."

III.

CONTROL OF NERVOUSNESS, CONTINUED: THE PHYSICAL SIDE OF IT—RELAXATION—SLEEP—CAUSES OF POOR SLEEP—HOW TO FORM GOOD HABITS, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL—VALUE OF SYSTEM AND ROUTINE.

IN the previous chapters were considered the common causes of nervousness in women, apart from the well-known and scarcely avoidable ones of purely physical origin, such as acute illness and those which may be described as plain foolishness. The former kind is impossible to consider in a popular article and to discuss the latter would be waste of time.

For the overcoming or prevention of nervousness the sum of the advice given may be repeated: the cultivation of self-control, a wholesome

regularity of physical life, and a reasonable variety of intellectual interests.

Physical Causes of Nervousness

Some further expansion of these statements will perhaps be helpful. It will be observed that no mention has been made of nervousness from sheer hard work, mental or bodily. It has, however, been implied at least that this should not be a cause if the general methods of life are sound and that overwork is seldom a cause alone, but only when it is combined with some form of mental strain, anxiety, hurry or worry, or when the ability to bear the mere physical burden is impaired by bad food, insufficient sleep, want of exercise, or the like,—in short, by bad hygienic conditions. As a matter of fact, it is

excessively rare to see nervous breakdown as a result of what may be called uncomplicated hard work. Hard work is not such a killing matter, but work and worry make a deadly combination. Another frequent cause, commoner perhaps in men than in women, is trying to do too many widely different things, to be officer, manager, director, trustee and partner in a dozen different societies, corporations and institutions. With women, there will be besides the business of the household and children, half a score of committees for altering the world in various ways, church work, and so on—and very probably social duties of an exacting kind to be added. The final disaster comes when just one small straw more is added to the burden—and great is the wreck thereof. Nor

is nervousness, as some think, the privilege of the well-to-do. Any physician in the way of seeing many nervous cases will tell you his hospital wards are full of women of the class of the wage-earners, mill-hands, seamstresses, maid-servants, and that he cares annually for large numbers of clerks, stenographers and above all, of teachers, victims of that most nerve-wrecking of all forms of work.

Economy of Exertion

Having added these causes to our lists, let us return to the question of prevention, which also needs some further elucidation. In a former chapter a good deal was said of the use and value of rest. Much more might be written upon this text. The term may well be extended for our purposes to include not only repose,

but the *economy of exertion* in all kinds of ways—how to spare one's self, in short. Any one who is nervous should be as careful how she expends energy, as, if she were poor in purse, she would be about getting her money's worth in what she buys. To rest should not be an art difficult of acquirement or one needing a teacher—yet many know very little of it. If you are physically tired, a very few minutes flat on your back is worth, as a means of repair, an hour's sitting in a chair; but mind that it be flat, not reclining on a lounge, or with your spine bent out of shape in a deep chair in which your weight rests on any part of your body except the parts intended to support it—above all, not in a rocking chair, that special trap for the nervous. Besides getting into this posi-

tion you must lie still in it, not holding yourself down on a couch or endeavoring to hold that article of furniture down—that is, you must be loose, relaxed, unstrung. Look at a child in bed, limbs sprawled all abroad, for "how to do it"—the ease of the careless position is more characteristic of perfect relaxation than the more composed attitude of a sleeping adult.

When you are asleep, it is to be hoped that you are still. Few people are when they are awake. If one observes the crowd in the streets, it is curious and most disagreeable to see how small the number is who are not constantly making grimaces and working their faces or jaws in some manner. I have heard it said that it was bashfulness that caused this, but it has not been my observation

that bashfulness was so widely distributed an American trait; besides, how does twisting the face help to "keep one in countenance"? No, it is not bashfulness; it is misdirected nervous energy, which should be aiding the movements of their legs or stored up somewhere in the general nervous reservoirs for future use.

Bodily Relaxation

Learn to keep still when you rest; when you move, move with the part of the body needed; do not waste your force by walking with your arms and face as well as your legs. If circumstances force an unusual and fatiguing amount of exertion upon you, break it now and then by periods of absolute rest. No matter how brief they are, they will be useful if you make them complete and perfect in

the way described. This is true of mental as well as bodily exertion. A minute or two of quiet, with closed eyes if possible, with your tension relaxed and the gearing of the machinery thrown off for the moment, will help and refresh you greatly. Here, again, more may be gained if the ability to relax mentally can be secured, in a fashion similar to the withdrawing of muscular tension. Learn to empty your mind when not using it. The importance of keeping down this attitude of tension, misdirected nerve activity, unintended and useless muscular contraction, lies, not in the waste of mechanical energy involved, but as Professor James says in his Talks to Students, in the "effects on the over-contracted person's spiritual life. . . . For by the sensations that so incessantly

pour in the over-tense and excited habit of mind is kept up: and the sultry, threatening, exhausting thunderous inner atmosphere never quite clears away. If you never quite give yourself up to the chair you sit in, but always keep your leg—and body—muscles half contracted for a rise: if you breathe eighteen or nineteen instead of sixteen times a minute, and never quite breathe out at that—what mental mood can you be in but one of inner panting and expectancy and how can the future and its worries possibly forsake your mind?"

The cultivation of this habit of relaxation and of economical use of nerve and muscle will not only help for the purpose of temporary repose, but may be made useful in bringing about sleep. Both *can* be acquired and made habitual. You will then be

less liable to have your day's work or worry pursue you to bed and fasten upon you, to the banishing of all possibility of going to sleep, or if you escape this, follow you into the land of Nod and hag-ride you in your dreams. Napoleon I is perhaps hardly to be held up as an ensample of conduct—but his appetite for work was enormous, his power of concentration well in hand, ready for use at any moment, and he could always sleep, no matter what his troubles or anxieties. O'Meara quotes Napoleon as saying about this last faculty that all subjects were arranged in his mind like drawers in a cabinet, and when he had done with one he closed the drawer, and would as soon expect the drawer of his desk to open itself as any subject he was done considering to turn up in his mind again or

to follow him to bed and prevent his sleeping.

Sleep

A treatise of some size might be written on how to go to sleep—and how not to go to sleep! As a rule, it is when one is over-fatigued, especially nervously, that the anxieties of the day torment one at night. A person troubled this way must make every effort to save fatigue. "But," they say, "how are we to know what will fatigue us? By the time we know we are tired, the mischief is done." The excuse should not be allowed to serve more than once. The second time the exertion must be well within the amount which before produced exhaustion. Moreover, every one, especially those who are not strong, should know how much he or

she can do—and stop before the danger point is reached. What is the point where fatigue becomes undue, excessive, perhaps dangerous? There is one fairly exact measure of unwise exertion. If the sense of fatigue does not pass off quickly with reasonable rest—then the amount of work performed has been too great. Such a limitation, of course, is not needed for persons in good health who seldom overstrain the system beyond a point which may be regained by a good night's refreshing rest.

Over-anxiety about sleep hinders its coming, too—and makes one wakeful. Muscular relaxation and a mind emptied of thought are the preliminary requisites. It may be worth while to add that while we know very little of the physiology of sleep, it is pretty certain that the amount of

blood in the brain is lessened during sleep, though whether this diminution in the blood supply is preliminary to or consequent upon sleep is unsure. On the other hand, thinking, or the active use of the mind, certainly increases the amount of blood in the head. The ordinary household remedies for wakefulness are founded on these facts—a hot foot-bath, a hot water bag to the body, a warm drink which draws the blood to the stomach, all having more or less directly the effect of reducing the quantity of blood in the head. Almost all sleep-producing medicines act in the same manner, but these are undesirable for nervous people who too easily grow dependent upon them. The habit of their use is not so dangerous as the slavery to pain-suppressing drugs, the greatest reason against the former

being rather in their somewhat depressing nervous and physical after effects.

Mental Relaxation

Though the habit of muscular relaxation may be acquired by practice, the ability to relax or to empty the mind, to stop its involuntary activity, is less easy. One has to enforce upon one's consciousness the fact that nothing can be gained by reconsideration of the sins of omission or commission in the hours past, or at least nothing so valuable that it should be allowed to lessen the period of needed rest. It is impossible for any one to say to himself, "I will not think. No troubles of the day shall stay with me at night." If Napoleon succeeded in keeping them away it was more a matter of temperament than effort of will. What one can do is to replace

the active labor of the mind with peaceful contemplations, to turn thought into different channels. Sometimes this is best accomplished by physical means such as have been described, sometimes by fixing the attention on simple calculations or merely idle but pleasant notions. Many active-minded people of intellectual habit find a dose of light literature a useful means for altering the current in which thought has been running and read poetry or fiction before bedtime, or even, though this seems to be considered almost criminal by old-fashioned folk, *after* going to bed. In doing this one has to be careful not to get so interested that he keeps awake to read.

Another common difficulty is waking from sleep too early. This may mean only that the period of sleep

has been sufficient, but if this seems not to be the case, or if the moment you have awakened all sorts of problems, mostly disagreeable, seize upon you and prevent your resting, some of the methods suggested for helping one to sleep at night may be tried, relaxation, fixing the mind on vacancy, or the taking of food. Of course the hours before the activities of the household have begun are not the best time to get food—but a glass of milk may be left ready overnight in a cooler and even a glass of water will often be sufficient.

It seems to be in these intervals between sleep and waking, the *praedormitium* and *post-dormitium,* although one has not quite gone to sleep in the former and not quite waked up in the latter, that one's fancies agreeable or disagreeable are

apt to run away with one and children particularly are often the victims of hallucinations or seized with little crises of alarm during these times when voluntary control is at its lowest point, when, as one might say, the police of the mind are least vigilant.

Amount of Sleep

It may be added here that there is a good deal of nonsense talked about sleep and most people consider more sleep is required than is really necessary for the purposes of repair of the day's waste of tissue. Some individuals need more than others; young folk during the period of growth, and, therefore, of the greatest physiologic activity need more than the mature,—but habit enters largely into these requirements also. A person who is making neither very great

physical nor very great mental exertion does not need so much sleep as a hard-working man. If sleep be sound and quiet, less hours of it will suffice than if it be broken. If one cannot sleep then to rest calmly is the next best thing.

Habits

The study of how to economize physical exertion by proper times and methods of rest, by not using muscles not needed for the act being performed, leads to a further piece of advice founded on physiologic facts, and having bearings on both nervous and bodily effort. Habits are readily acquired, only too readily sometimes, but it is fortunately just as easy to acquire good habits as bad ones. A habit may be defined as the result of efforts mental or physical,

which have been repeated so often that they have become automatic—that is, are performed without conscious willing. This state is brought about by the tendency of nerve-force to transmit itself along the most used ways, to follow, as physical forces do, the paths of least resistance. A child's first attempts at walking are wholly conscious efforts and require concentrated attention. The grown person walks automatically and so it is with hundreds of other things we do daily. If you increase the number of things done automatically, you decrease by just so much the demands upon the higher nerve-centres which control effort. Any one who doubts this or who wishes to prove how much more wearying conscious effort is than the automatic performance of the same amount of work, has only

to try a short walk or go up stairs with voluntary careful attention to the completion of each muscular movement required. A short flight of steps, or a couple of hundred yards of distance covered thus, will produce a distinct sense of fatigue in the muscles of the whole lower half of the body.

Punctuality

Make as many of the things you have to do automatic by repetition as possible, thus relieving the controlling centres of some of their duties, and giving more ability and opportunity for the performance of higher functions. For example, mere punctuality in the matter of doing minor things, such, let us say, as household duties,—relieves you of one form of worriment. You will no longer find it necessary to discuss with yourself

when you shall do this or that; the time is fixed. The habit will soon become fastened upon you. A somewhat rigid punctuality has, too, an effect in improving the balance of nervous people for good in a way and to an extent not easy to account for.

System

To make your necessary duties and work as systematic as possible is an approach to performing them automatically and saves small anxieties, does away with the constant making of decisions, and the over consideration of trifles. By advising system I do not mean to recommend that sort of craze for orderliness which so often defeats itself and causes more trouble than it brings help. Women only too often think tidiness is good order, and in obedience to this idea

put things away so carefully that they cannot be found when wanted, while they condemn the orderly disorder of a man's work-room or desk where everything wanted is instantly accessible.

System is what is wanted, a methodical, planned system, elastic enough to be livable, and yet exact enough to hold one to the performance of certain duties at certain stated times. Hours for rest, hours for leisure, hours for pleasure, must enter into such a schedule as well as appointments for work and food and duty. Rise at a certain time, have meals punctually; if you go out, go with a list of what you intend to do in the order in which you mean to do it. Then you will not need to worry at having forgotten something and have to go over the same ground again. Insist that business whether

domestic or other, be limited to stated times. If you can fix the hours at which you will see friends so as not to break into your settled routine at unsuitable seasons, this will save you much annoyance. In sending convalescents home after treatment, they say that to have this last point insisted upon and backed up by the physician's authority is a great help.

All this advice about the management of life in minor matters is needed, because it cannot be too often repeated that it is the little troubles of life that cause the most breakdowns, not the great hurts or efforts. A hundred small anxieties or worries are like so much sand in the axles, and far more dangerous and damaging than is the one big stone which the wheels bump over somehow, roughly perhaps, but successfully.

IV.

Of Established Nervousness and its Symptoms—Loss of Appetite—Relations of Nervousness to Food and Nutrition—Errors and Fancies About Special Diets—How to Economize Nervous Energy.

It is evident that much of the advice already given to those with tendencies to nervousness will apply with still greater force to the sufferer from established nervousness: the value of system and regularity of life, rational activity of mind and body, wholesome and sufficient food and sleep, the avoidance of causes of nervous irritation and of excessive emotion.

One patient will tell you when you thus counsel her that this formula begs the question, for her trouble is that she is unable to be systematic or

regular because she cannot decide on a course of action or follow it out if she does decide; that exertion, mental or physical, is impossible because it is so deadly fatiguing; that she cannot take food because she has no appetite or because she has indigestion; that she sleeps badly and worries over everything, but especially trifles, and is extravagantly emotional.

Another sufferer will answer a little differently, asserting that she does lead a regular life and avoids nervous irritation yet gets no help from it. Very likely this is true as she sees it, but what does she understand by a regular life? and how does she avoid causes of worry? The chances are strong that if she has arranged her system according to her own ideas, it is altogether a wrong

one and with the self-indulgence of the nervous invalid she has interpreted avoidance of worry to mean avoiding all exertion of mind and body, the shifting of every burden to other shoulders—a course well calculated further to enfeeble a moral fibre already weakened.

There are some victims of nervousness too ill to undertake the regulation and management of their lives in the way we are discussing, of course, and such cases should be in the hands of a physician.

If, however, things are not so bad as to make this imperative and if the victim is an intelligent woman with some real comprehension of her condition and has retained some remnants of self-control, she may yet be able to help herself effectively. Let the case as stated be accepted as

genuine: the patient cannot decide on nor bring to a satisfactory ending any desired action, or feels as if she cannot, which amounts for our present purpose to the same thing: cannot exert herself, eats too little, sleeps ill, goes in constant apprehension of she knows not what, is full of worry in anticipation and regret in retrospection, is emotional and always tired. Nothing interests her, friends, household, books, amusements, her usual occupations, all fail to do anything except add to her fatigue. In fact, the only things in the world that do concern her are herself and her symptoms, or rather herself as a subject of symptoms.

Schedule of Work

What shall she do to lessen this sad catalogue of troubles and where must

she begin? First, some exact measure must be had of her real physical strength: if she is one of the invalids who can do things when they want to, though she may suffer from excessive fatigue afterward, (which she will probably call "collapse," with the characteristic exaggeration of her kind) let a schedule be laid out with a prescribed minimum and maximum amount of exertion ordered daily. This is best done for her by some one else, of course with due regard to her tastes, possibilities of accomplishment, her habits and those of her household: this "day's order" should include hours for work, rest, diversion and should set down absolute limits beyond which she should not go in the way of exertion and below which she must not fall. This will settle the matter of punctuality and

regularity and remove at once almost all making of decisions. The schedule should not be the same for every day and must have a moderate degree of elasticity with some alternative possibilities to suit changes of weather and the like: but outside this, at first at any rate no choice of hours or occupations should be given, all being strictly prescribed. Here, with a certain kind of person, will begin the difficulty. This particular variety of patient will fuss over the anti-fussing schedule, worry lest she should forget things at their proper hours, and fret for fear she may have neglected to do something at the moment ordered. There is only one cure for such a patient; a strict, sensible companion or nurse with full authority, and made, as nurses for nervous patients ought to be, of what mechanics

call anti-friction metal. Put the list of hours and doings into her hands, and let it be carried out exactly and without consultation with the patient —if possible without the patient's knowledge of what the scheduled occupations are. Such a case as this will probably need to be under a physician's care, and, having sent her there, we will return to our nervous wreck who is trying to care for herself, and take up the next point in the list, activity. Perhaps she is right and exertion *is* impossible for her unless at too great cost. In that event, she, too, should be under a doctor, and she may be dismissed to the same hospital with the last patient. But if this assertion is only partly true and some activity remains possible, let the amount be exactly meted out in the schedule and the minimum

dose having been once established, let it be taken daily, if it is only a few minutes' walk or a short drive. Do not try to increase this quantity for some time. Mental exertion, if found exhausting, should be given in small doses in the same way.

I have sometimes found it necessary to see a patient in such a frame of mind as this daily for weeks and to set down a written list for the day in detail. She must report at each visit how successful her accomplishment of the things ordered has been the day before and receive, besides the schedule, criticism or reproof, encouragement or admonition and occasional small doses of praise when it seems really deserved—a valuable medicine when cautiously administered. At first these patients come full of excuses for failure, with excel-

lent reasons to offer why they have not lived up to the orders pointing out how impossible it is for them to do things in such ways—it might be feasible for some, but with their temperament and their physical condition, it ought not to be asked or expected of them. One repeats over and over until it finally penetrates through the thick armor of self-consciousness and self-consideration with which they are defended, that the things advised can be done, must be done, and little by little attains one's end. After awhile, often weeks, the excuses and evasions are less frequently offered or are offered with apologies and presently the patient finds herself doing all she said she could not do and, what is much more vital, begins to recognize the falseness of the formerly all-sufficient

arguments she had pleaded to secure mitigation or alteration in the physician's judgment. Once this much gain has been made, the pathway to improvement is smooth and easy.

Appetite

Next as to the terrible question of food. Nervous absence of appetite is a very common symptom. If the difficulty is no greater than this, it must be overcome by steady effort, taking definite quantities at regular intervals, whether wanted or not, whether liked or disliked, gradually adding to the amount. If there is real indigestion, that is a different matter, and for this again the patient will have to be referred to the doctor; but the two symptoms should not be confused; distaste for food, even discomfort on taking food, does not

necessarily mean indigestion. It may be merely that a stomach long unused to the regular exercise of all its functions is discontented at being asked to work, or unready for work. All our organs form habits easily, the stomach most easily of any. If it is certain that only a rebellion is to be dealt with, it should be handled as in the former case by repeated and regular efforts to take food in moderate quantities without regard to the lack of desire for it.

Without food there can be no permanent gain of strength: tonics cannot replace it, nor apothecary's stuff be substituted for it, except for a short period in an emergency. The habit of abstaining from food is a very difficult one to break in hysterical or nervous invalids and often courageous and persistent effort will be

required to overcome it. Appetite comes with eating, the French proverb says, but sometimes it is a long time coming; meanwhile the patient must go on eating! One sees extraordinary instances of long-continued fasting, where the idea of the impossibility of taking food has become thoroughly ingrained and the patient in consequence reaches the verge of death by starvation; some instances have occurred where a craze for notoriety or a religious delusion has supplied a motive powerful enough to cause a wretched girl to go without food until death actually resulted.

To state scientific facts concisely and exactly without technical terms is extremely difficult; one is forced to use words and phrases which merely more or less well represent matters that can be briefly and precisely told

only in technical language. Scientific men are accused of wilfully obscuring their thoughts because they choose to express them in a language of world-wide acceptability; it is as if a mechanic should be found fault with for preferring to measure with a steel tape rather than by the length of his thumb or the breadth of his hand. With this preliminary excuse in case any scientific person should condescend upon the perusal of this chapter and fall foul of its statements as inaccurate, let me endeavor to point out some of the reasons why so much stress has been laid upon the matter of feeding the nervously weak.

Fatigue Symptoms

The nervous system is the most complex, the latest developed and probably the most unstable portion

of the human economy. Its tissue elements are consumed in performing their functions to a greater degree than the cellular tissues of other parts of the body. In an extraordinarily interesting series of observations Doctor Hodges, of Clark University, studying with the microscope the nervous centres, first of honey-bees, later of other small animals, found a difference so great between the central nerve-cells of creatures in an unfatigued state and those of animals of the same species which had been working hard, that he could state with accuracy whether the specimens shown him were taken, for example, from a bee on leaving a hive in the morning, or from one returning at night after hours of labor. It is at least probable that in human beings who suffer with the constant

feeling of fatigue so graphically described by nervous patients, there is a chronic condition of the nerve-cells resembling that of the centres in the tired bees. Rest will restore them to a certain extent, but the material for repair must come from the other tissues, chiefly from the blood, and these must be supplied with this material by food. If food is not taken in quantity sufficient to make good the loss then other tissues are depleted, weakened, starved, to nourish the nervous system, and a reacting effect follows which further injures the enfeebled nerves.

Malnutrition a Source

It may fairly be argued that almost all nervous diseases, even including those in which there is organic alteration in the nerve elements, are funda-

mentally due to *some form of impairment of nutrition.* The statement is a sweeping one, and would be hard to justify without being over-technical, but when one considers in how many ways impaired nutrition may be brought about, it is not so wild as it looks at first sight. There may be failure to get enough to eat, or there may be enough, but not of the right sort; the organs of digestion may be at fault, so that the material taken is not well prepared for absorption or well assimilated, and from any or all of these causes there may follow a weakening of the natural resistance to disease and to many substances that under ordinary conditions of health have no bad effect, but which when resistance is thus lowered become actively injurious.

Peculiar Food

At this point some further digression may be allowed on food and feeding, especially in view of the widespread superstitions current on these subjects, some the result of misinterpretations of physiologic facts, some due to misrepresentations by persons interested in promoting the use of some particular kind of universally desirable food-stuff, some due to the honest noisy ignorance of half-educated fanatics.

There are no such things as "nerve foods" or "brain foods": the nerves depend for their nutrition, as was said a little way back, on material supplied them by the other tissues, of which the blood is the most important source, the nerves having no opportunity to select or reject, nor indeed

any physiologic means of making such choice. There is, therefore, no possibility of feeding the nerves separately from the rest of the body by selected diets any more than there is of feeding the fingers or toes separately.

Whether foods affect the nerves evilly or wholesomely depends primarily on the effect of such foods on other organs, the stomach, intestines, liver or blood-making organs. Curiously enough, while certain poisons have distinct selective actions on the nerves, lead, arsenic and mercury, for example, no food is known to have any such special influence. The old belief still widely held that phosphorus is a brain-food is founded on a misunderstanding of a statement of Professor Agassiz's.

Fallacies of Diet

Special diets, particularly if they are of narrow range and small variety, are to be distrusted for any use. For instance, an exclusive meat-diet, once a popular cure-all, is useful in rare instances if controlled and not too long continued. An exclusively vegetable diet offers a much wider range of food-stuffs, chemically considered, than a diet of meat alone, and when the professed vegetarian is advocating or using it, it generally includes the essentials of animal food by taking into its embrace and into the stomachs of its adherents, butter, eggs and milk. A fancy for living altogether on raw food is one of the latest crazes of this kind but hardly needs to be seriously considered.

An innumerable array of patent breakfast foods, each the sole and only means of salvation and all founded on the solid rocks of wheat and oats with an occasional hint of rice, are loud enough in their claims to require some notice. They are almost all good enough if one does not allow one's self to be scolded and bullied by advertisements into taking them in too large quantities or to the exclusion from one's food list of more needed elements. Oatmeal porridge did not make Scotland a great nation. The Scots are a strong race who could rise superior even to a diet of oatmeal. The Japanese have done things, not because they lived on rice, as some using a common logical fallacy as an argument would have us believe, but in spite of living on rice.

Man Omnivorous

To sum the matter up, there is every reason to believe that man was intended to be omnivorous, that is to used a mixed diet. His teeth and all his internal arrangements bear witness to this, not to mention his habits, of which we have sufficient evidence covering many thousands of years. There is no smallest jot of testimony, physiological, paleontolgical or historical that man since he became man was ever exclusively graminivorous, frugivorous or carnivorous except when driven by circumstances. The conclusion then must be in favor of a mixed diet, that is, one which shall include in proper proportions animal and vegetable food, especially for nervous people who need above most others to be well-fed.

A practical hint or two may be use-

ful to those who have no appetite or desire for food, and yet ought to take it. Have nothing to do with the choice, preparation or service of your own meals. If you have a fancy for something tell your household purveyor, but let it come to you unexpected. The woman who orders a dinner has eaten it before it reaches the table; if she cooks it too, then she has eaten it twice. Is it any wonder she has no appetite for a third course of it?

A radical change in the hours of meals will sometimes help to provoke appetite, such as taking the chief meal of the day an hour earlier or later, or transferring it from midday to evening or vice versa.

To rest before meals so as to come fresh and untired to table is good—and to rest after meals is a great help to weak digestions and if necessary

these times of rest should be included in the schedule and be precisely limited.

In cases where it is almost impossible for the patient to take food for herself, she will often take enough without trouble if she is actually fed by another person's hand,—but anyhow, let her eat!

Sleep

Of sleep there is little to be said which would not be mere repetition. Many nervous people sleep well, just as some eat well; it is probable that the ability to do either or both of these acts saves them from worse nervousness at least. Many, too, desire to get for themselves an altogether unnecessary quantity of sleep and are dissatisfied unless they secure a really abnormal allowance. The hypochondriac whose fancy runs this

way will tell you with woe that she only got seven or eight hours' sleep —a period of slumber probably as long as would be needed by an active and healthy adult past the stage of youth and not yet arrived at the time when again more rest is needed to recruit the waning energies of old age. It is sometimes necessary to prove conclusively to a patient that more sleep is secured than he supposes. A medical friend suggested the plan in one such instance of inviting the person (who said he "never closed an eye at night") to sit up all night. This was tried one night, and a small part of a second—when he was found willing to admit that he must after all have slept a good deal.

One warning cannot be too often repeated—medicines to produce sleep are dangerous, with different degrees

of danger, to be sure, but still not things to be trusted to the hands of ignorance, especially where ignorance is personally interested. Sleep-inducing drugs are occasionally necessary to save from worse evils, but they need supervision—a doctor's supervision, that is. Even the drugs which may fairly be described as harmless, sulfonal, trional and their kind, if used at all continuously have a bad effect upon the character of the blood, so that the user begins to get more and more pale and anæmic from this injury to the red blood cells and may bring about a really serious blood poverty, affecting the nutrition of the whole body.

Economizing Energy

Lastly as to economy of nervous energy. On this, too, much has been

said, but the text is a fruitful and suggestive one and many sermons could be hammered out of it.

First, let it be repeated that whether the essential cause of nervousness can be reached and conquered or not, the less open manifestations of nervousness the patient permits herself the better it will be for her in every way.

Do not talk about your feelings or your fatigue or your sleep, do not utter or allow the word *nerves* to be uttered in your presence.

If no better reason can be found, a decent consideration for the comfort of others should keep one from talking of one's ailments. To talk about yourself is bad manners, to be sorry for yourself will make no one more sorry for you, and self-pity is a poor kind of emotion. Besides being bad

manners, it is well to remember that the subject is wholly without interest for any one but the speaker: the hearer listens perfunctorily in hopes presently to seize the chance of telling her own melancholy condition.

To talk much of ills mental or bodily helps to fix them in the mind, to intensify them, often really makes them worse, and even when it does not do this is terribly apt to suggest an unconscious exaggeration to make a good round tale—and from this to imagining symptoms is a short and sadly easy step. To cultivate and encourage genuine emotions to overgrowth is bad enough, to sow and till a crop of false emotions is a moral crime.

Moreover if you talk about your feelings too much or too often you not only irritate your friends who would

prefer to be talking about theirs, but even the long suffering physician may grow tired and inattentive from being battered with symptoms whose catalogue he has heard a hundred times—and thus the very means taken to impress them will bring about its own defeat.

There are women who think it feminine and interesting to be nervous and to be in a continual sizzle of excitement about little matters, and who thus acquire not only false standards of feeling, but presently a total inability to feel genuinely or simply about anything.

Change of Schedule

The scheduled plan of life is, of course, a temporary measure, though a similar systematization of the day's work to some extent is always

useful for any one who needs to save strength. Gradually as improvement comes the more inconvenient rules of the time-table may be relaxed or withdrawn one by one, holding on longest to the rest periods before and after meals. If the digestion is weak, the rest *after* meals is the more important. If digestion is only bad when the patient is fatigued then the before-meal rest should be the one to keep on with.

If there is the direction of a household and the coming and going of a much demanding family to be borne, the isolation-period of uninterrupted quiet for an hour or two at a set time during the day should be continued in order to make sure of at least that much respite.

The benefits to be expected from this plan may be recapitulated—the

removal of the need for small decisions, the replacing of uncertainty and irregularity by exactness and punctuality, necessary rest at fixed times and a general lessening of wear and tear. In short it is an arrangement for the storage of nervous energy and for its properly economical expenditure.

V.

Of Nervousness in Children and Its Prevention.

The subject of nervousness in children, its prevention and cure, includes the whole of education, using the word in its widest sense. The attempt to cover so vast a field might well give pause even to a popular lecturer who is expected to compress all knowledge into fifteen minutes for easy comprehension and administer the concentrated wisdom of ancients and moderns in a condensed tablet capable of being swallowed at a single gulp.

However, let us begin with a few questions which will serve as sign-posts to direct us through this too wide territory. The natural inquiries which would be made by a mother are: "Are my children likely to be

nervous? How shall I recognize the early manifestations? What must I do to prevent or cure them?" We will generalize these particular queries and try to answer them in the briefest way.

Causes

What children are likely to be nervous? In the first chapter it was said that some people are born nervous, some acquire nervousness, and some have it thrust upon them. The statement will serve again. The offspring of parents themselves nervous are more likely to display the inheritance in some form than those of persons with no such tendency. The children of neurotic, or hysterical, or epileptic, or consumptive mothers or fathers very commonly show their taint physically or mentally. The

children of drunken parents with horrible frequency are imbecile, epileptic, or highly nervous.

Of course the chance of a child's being diseased is greatly increased where both parents are the subjects of the same disease or have the same tendency. This intensification of inheritance is one of the greatest reasons against the marriage of near cousins.

Next after parental influence in importance stands the environment of children during the years of growth. Under the term environment are to be understood all the physical circumstances of life—*i.e.,* food, clothing, climate, dwelling place. Along with these is to be considered the moral atmosphere which surrounds the child—*i.e.,* the example,

companionship, discipline and control to which it is subjected.

Feeding Children

At the risk of repetition emphasis must be laid again upon the question of nutrition, the more as this is one of the factors of health which is most within our control. We are not always at liberty to select our place to live, we cannot control climate, but we can give children enough food of good kinds. It has been said already that in the greater number of cases of nervousness some fault of nutrition is among the main causes and it was then also explained that this did not mean only insufficient food but also wrong food or wrong assimilation. In children whose parentage makes one apprehensive of future nervousness or whose dis-

position indicates tendencies in that direction especial care and consideration must therefore be given to the diet. This need not mean that they should have special foods but that what they get should be digestible, appetizing and sufficiently varied, monotony being one of the chief faults usually found in the feeding of young children. Over-careful adults sometimes unduly limit the quantity of food of older children when, judging by their own appetites or capacities, they refuse to allow the child all it wants whereas the child's unsophisticated instinct is a far better guide than the adult's mere opinion. This is true also to a great extent of the character of the food as well as the amount. For instance the desire for sugar in some form often regarded or reproved as merely an

unwholesome and gluttonous taste truly indicates a physiologic necessity and one that should be ministered to, not denied. Children who are allowed enough sugar in whatever shape may be convenient will not desire to gorge themselves with candy or poor sweet stuffs at undesirable times and in unreasonable quantities and their ceaseless activity soon burns it up.

Men leading a life of hard muscular exertion often share the same desire for sugar and I have seen a woodsman of mature years after many weeks of severe although well fed work in camp set himself down on his return to civilization and stow away a liberal pound of plain sugar candy.

The final chapter of Herbert Spencer's "Education" contains

some useful reflections and suggestions on this subject, though his specific instances are drawn from English usage. He speaks with force of the danger in childhood from underfeeding being greater than from overfeeding, as growth retarded or interrupted at that period is never made up.

Parents a Cause

As for acquired nervousness, apart from disease and malnutrition, parents are the commonest cause of nervousness in children; sometimes by false precept or wrong methods but more often by unintentional example or suggestion.

Even if a baby has some manifestations of nervousness, you should not be too ready to attribute all sorts of trouble in children to "nerves."

Your grandmother laid the same sort of difficulties to "teething"—with as little reason. If the child is restless or irritable or sleepless, the chances are much greater that its digestive apparatus has gone wrong somewhere than that it is causelessly nervous or that its teeth are disturbing it. In consequence of the tenderness resulting from teething the mouth secretions may be changed, thus affecting digestion, or the food may be insufficiently masticated. Make sure about these things and do not rest satisfied with calling the whole trouble teething and allowing it to go at that. Above all do not dose it with poisons under flat-catching names—soothing syrup, elixir, teething-balm, or what not. These with scarcely an exception contain opium in some form, a drug with specially

injurious effects upon children. The louder the advertisements assert that no such article is used in the prescription the more certain one may be that it is present. Remember, too, that what would be abnormal restlessness in an adult is only evidence of healthy activity in a little one.

To the question how much of nervousness is avoidable or preventable it is not easy to give a categorical answer of a general kind. Each special individual problem needs special individual solution. But it is true that in those whose tendencies inherited from parents or remoter ancestors are towards nervousness, any lowering of vitality will be apt to show itself in some form of nervous disturbance, exactly as happens in grown people. In this one, any impairment of general health results in

digestive troubles; in that one, a like cause will produce headache or pain in the back; while in another whose weak link is in the nervous system various nervous symptoms will be the consequence.

Heredity

The means of prevention, as Dr. Holmes has somewhere said, would often have to be applied three or four generations back to be effectual. If the great-great-grandmother had not had that shock to her nerves when the Indians attacked the family log cabin in 1801, little Polly would not have been nervous in 1901. Admitting such difficulties and with all reservations made, it is nevertheless true that a large proportion of the cases of general nervousness that one sees could have been avoided or pre-

vented had they been recognized and treated at the proper time.

A remnant of the superstitition which regarded the doctor as a sorcerer, and his art as at best a sort of "white magic," is the widespread feeling, against which a physician constantly finds himself striving, that there is a panacea for every woe, a medicine which fits every case, if only it can be discovered. Patients are unwilling to follow a definite, reasonable, carefully thought-out plan of life, and beg for a specific, for some drug which can be taken in teaspoonful doses three times a day, or for some remedy to be applied to the mind in five-minute shocks of prayer or hysterical exhortation, to serve instead of temperance, soberness and chastity. Unfortunately there are always quacks to be found to minis-

ter to this desire for a short and easy method, with patent systems of education for the mind wherewith the most ignorant may become a Newton by taking a brief course of lectures, patent foods to replace beef and bread, patent medicines as a substitute for common-sense, and patent methods of salvation to obviate the difficulties of walking in the straight and narrow way.

To set this right at once so far as our present subject is concerned, let it be said without delay that there is no specific against nervousness, or if there be, it is not on the apothecary's shelves, nor, when there is a physical foundation, will the utmost constancy of effort in prayer or mental struggle suffice to cure until bodily health is restored.

Tennyson has put it well for us:

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control—
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.

It has been said already that the strongest are the least nervous, not meaning by strongest the most muscular, but those in the soundest health of body and mind. No one is exempt from accidents of disease or injury, from the changes or chances which may result in nervousness as a consequence of impaired nutrition or lessened vital force—but the likelihood of such a result is less in a hearty, robust child, not only because his nerves, as well as his other tissues, are better nourished, but because he has more power to resist the invasion of disease, is less liable to serious effects from small injury, and has a stronger inherent tendency to recover both in his physical fibre and in his spirit

than a weaker individual. He has, in the common phrase, a better constitution.

Hygiene of Nervousness

It is impossible to put a treatise on the hygiene of infancy and childhood into a few sentences, but some cautions may be emphasized. Health is not to be obtained for children or for their seniors by coddling processes, and for both natural methods are the best. Games are better for children than gymnasium work, unless the latter be needed for some special reason, such as a crooked spine, a weak leg, bad breathing habits, the correction of deformities, the improvement of an awkward carriage, and so on. Nor is there any reason why in the earlier years of life, until sex differences begin to show, girls should

not have the same outdoor sports and activities as boys. If they are properly brought up in other respects and have good examples of manners and courtesy to imitate no fear need be felt of their being rude or rough in consequence. One does not expect boys to be rude because they play boisterous games, and anyhow a great gain is well worth a small risk. Remember, too, that there is something to be learned from many games that is at least as important as the increase of muscle and the strengthening of the heart, for in those into which an element of rivalry enters, like tennis, baseball, cricket, basket-ball, the acquisition of self-control, the subordination of one's own share of the game to the desire for one's side to win, the playing of one's part under orders, and the calm acceptance of

defeat, all are disciplinary, and teach unconsciously some of the best lessons of life.

To row, to ride, to swim, to handle a rod, a tennis racket, or a golf club are as much within the competence of girls as of boys. As for turning out tomboys instead of young ladies, that will take care of itself in course of time. And have you never observed that the little girls who bore the reproach of being tomboys were rather apt to turn out very charming and attractive women?

Dangers of Gymnasium Work

A few words about physical education—and a caution. The various systems and methods of physical cultivation for the most part deal too exclusively with bodily functions and do not take into consideration the

part which the nervous system must have in physical acts. If they are unintelligently applied they often make the nervous worse—or at least, if they do no harm they fail to bring about any more vital or deeper-reaching improvement than an added muscular force. For example if a nervous child, especially a child whose brain is worked to its full capacity at school, is sent to a gymnasium and put at exercises requiring careful attention to the orders of a teacher, or exact imitation of a teacher's motions, one effect of the exercise may very possibly be to give the child so much additional brain work as to overtax it. If the same child were to take its exercise by playing well-known games, even violent ones, or by walking or bicycling, the performance of these would not need

the strain of attention, because the child can do them automatically and it would therefore profit far more, gaining all the advantage of muscular exertion without nervous effort.

This is a point often neglected in the prescribing of exercise. A person intellectually and physically idle, on the other hand, would benefit more by exercise calling for active brain work and a constant effort of will in the ordering of muscular acts, thus securing the double advantage of cerebral and muscular work at the same time.

Education

The acquisition of self-control was cited as one of the advantages to be gotten from games, but other lessons in it will be needed. My own view is very far from the modern system

which allows the child to do as it pleases and holds that all control and discipline are wrong and that children should be governed by request and explanation. Suppose we tried to follow a similar plan in physical matters. Would it be reasonable to prepare for muscular effort by abstaining from exertion? The moral qualities need to be kept in training as well as the bodily functions. If children were born with instinctive tendencies to be good and to tell the truth and to be obedient and to keep clean, the system would work very well. As it is, most children have human defects which need correction. Control them to teach them self-control. They will never acquire it so lightly in any other way. If they are left to learn at the knees of life what should have been taught in the

nursery they will find her a harder mistress than their mother, and buy the knowledge with pain and blood and with the bitter tears of man and woman, instead of the passing griefs of childhood.

Few grown people are so fortunate as to need to take no thought for health, but this is a burden from which children should be free. Their food, clothes, rest and activities must be ordered and regulated for them; but let no anxiety to please the child, no consideration for infantile feelings, induce the mother to inquire too much about health. She should depend on her own observation, for with those of nervous tendency it is frightfully easy by fussing to make them into most promising hypochondriac invalids before their skirts reach below their knees. Above all,

there should be no talk of the child's nervousness or its feelings or ailments, real or fanciful, in its presence.

The coachman's rough and ready rule is not a bad one to judge by; if his horse eats he thinks there is not much wrong. If your young hopeful takes food well no great alarm need be felt, for in children the stomach is a quick-acting index to the general condition. Even with healthy and strong children there is danger if they are asked too much about how they feel, or hear too much about the wholesomeness or possible ill effects of this or that diet. Some of the foretold results will very likely soon be observed by a sensitive child, more fussing follows on the part of an anxious parent, and the prophecy is presently in a fair way to fulfilment.

A child should never know it has a body until that fact is forced upon it; most certainly it should not learn it by being taught over-respect for small pains, the over-anxious consideration of food and constant watchfulness of its own feelings. Feeling about feelings and thinking about thinking are dangerous habits for a responsible adult and fatal for a child.

Precept and Example

It is even more necessary to remember that though precept may be important, example has greater power, and children with the faculty for imitation largely developed are influenced both consciously and unconsciously by what they see and hear. A complaining restless mother, at war with herself, finding fault with

her surroundings, with no settled plan of education, is certain to bring up querulous, irritable, "nervous" children. If she cannot understand her own temperament, how can she recognize the several perhaps widely differing individual characters of her children?

VI.

Sympathy—Its Use and Its Abuse.

The original meaning of sympathy, "feeling with" a person, has become so perverted in common usage that in English the word has lost a large part of its value. In French and Italian it retains the additional notion of comprehension and understanding of all the feelings of others, whether joy or pain. With us, it denotes as ordinarily employed only pity, with perhaps a color of sorrow for suffering —a passing and superficial emotion, not a constant attitude of the mind.

Those "in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity" are fit subjects for sympathy, but how shall it be best expressed and made most useful? Sick persons, especially

nervous invalids, are far too apt to consider that no one is sympathetic who does not fuss over them, accept complaints at their face value, yield completely to every whim, admire and approve the noble courage with which their ills are borne, sing praises of their fortitude and tell over the tale of their woes to every listener in and out of season.

False Sympathy

The appetite for this false and injurious sympathy grows fast by what it feeds on. The invalid demands more and more of it and wants the dose made stronger. If real ailments do not furnish ground for complaint they may readily be magnified: in time certain types of patients begin to invent them in order to gain approbation, consideration, in short,

in their own phrase, "needed sympathy."

Not so rarely with those of hypochondriac tendency, the ideas at first half involuntarily put forward to secure attention grow till they master mind and body and become obsessions, of whose unreal character the one possessed with them is no longer aware. When such notions are once established it is nearly impossible to dislodge them—and although by long and careful care, physical and moral, the patient may be brought to perceive their falsity, the notions nevertheless remain in the mental background, to start into pernicious activity the moment that lowered nervous or bodily tone gives opportunity.

The effect upon the giver of false sympathy is bad. Real feeling can-

not be poured out in floods to meet every-day demands, often upon most trivial grounds, without a serious drain. The effect is still worse if the feeling has to be imitated or a little real feeling largely diluted to increase the apparent supply. Imitations and adulterations of the genuine article pass pretty well, because what is wanted is words and external expressions, not earnest and heartfelt emotion. To counterfeit emotions is bad for the utterers of such false coin —makes it impossible for them to feel truly or to express real feeling in a truthful way. They soon grow to think their dull counterfeits are the pure gold of the heart.

The patient too, at first satisfied with any expression of feeling, grows more and more exigent and either wants stronger doses of the wine of

flattery or becomes weak enough to be satisfied with the most foolish expressions of it, and a small amount of real feeling must be more and more alloyed with base metal, until it takes utterly silly forms, like that of the mother who slaps the table to comfort the child that has bumped its head against the naughty piece of furniture. To be sure this harms the table little but does it tend to a wholesome attitude of mind in the child?

Not for a moment should this be taken as meaning that loving service and earnest affection are not valuable and helpful things to the sick—but they must be mingled with intelligence, with real comprehension, not a superficial imitation, and there must be a certain kind of detached and critical position maintained in order to keep the judgment unimpaired.

True Sympathy

By what test shall genuine sympathy be recognized? How far and in what way is sympathy useful to the mind-sick? It is often not the fault either of the sick person or of her too fond attendants that the condition above described is reached. At first, want of understanding of the character or seriousness of the illness may cause a wrong position to be taken from which it is hard to escape. The false perspective previously spoken of and the making of trifles unduly important, are natural consequences of long-continued sickness but must be guarded against, —particularly when the illness promises to be long. The maintenance of a wholesome atmosphere, of an interest in things outside of self should be sought for in every way and at all

times. The needed attention to physical necessities, pain, discomfort, the annoyance of bodily disablement, should not be allowed to banish or outweigh intellectual interest and occupation.

True sympathy keeps its ability to hold the balance between overindulgence of whims, permitting the growth of fanciful troubles, encouraging complaints, on the one side, and neglect or want of recognition of the actual state of the patient's mind on the other. True sympathy involves comprehension of what the sufferer's self cannot recognize: true sympathy sees clearly, realizes honestly, and can if need be administer with tact and consideration the wholesome bitter of truth, a tonic which however sweetly and earnestly offered is seldom received kindly by a patient whose un-

healthy cravings ask different or less useful medicine.

Sympathetic Doctors

"Professional sympathy" as usually understood is the poorest imitation of all. What it ought to be is active, helpful, clear-sighted, doing what is best with the sole aim of cure. It need not be brutal or tactless, but it must disregard the patient's feelings or look upon them as of secondary moment. What such patients as we are speaking of mean when they praise their doctor as sympathetic is that he is a pleasant mannered, attentive, hand-holding kind of person, willing to accept their own estimate of their feelings, to take their symptomatic statements literally, be ready to administer endless, usually harmless, prescriptions and to come for

that purpose at any hour of the night. To act thus is not so wearing, but if the physician were really sympathetic in the usual sense of the word he would soon be disabled for the practice of his profession. If he had literally to "suffer with" some dozens of patients every day, how long would his emotional possibilities stand the strain? It is surely enough to ask of him to know what to do and to do it, often at the risk of misunderstanding, of reproach from the ignorant, of absence of appreciation from those to whom he is giving of his best. A doctor who seems to sympathize too much is to be distrusted. If this sympathy is pretended that should morally disqualify him: if he truly feels in the way patients often demand, then he is unfitted for calm judgment. There are plenty of cases

which call for treatment that may be painful, distressing or dangerous. How can a man balance coolly questions of suffering, of life and death, where his affections are involved with the answer? You may recall that no sensible physician will attend his own family, a matter which seems to afford a good deal of amusement to the laity; the reason lies precisely in the fact that where his feelings are concerned his judgment is likely to be colored by them. One might even go further and say that a physician personally strange to the patient is often all the better judge of what is needed for his very lack of biassing knowledge.

Let me illustrate the difference: A surgeon was called in consultation by a lady physician to see a boy suffering with tubercular disease of the

bones of the ankle. On consideration he advised amputation of the foot before the infection spread further. But the sympathetic physician would not listen to this because, said she, the boy was so beautiful and attractive it was a shame to condemn him to lose his foot. Amputation was accordingly postponed and ultimately, the disease ascending, the leg had to be taken off at the thigh to save his life — involving an operation of greater risk, a far greater lameness, and all because he had a sympathetic doctor who admired his golden curls.

Self-fulness

The nervous patient who is bright, charming and agreeable with strangers and querulous, selfish, affection-demanding at home, is a well-known type, too often the product of a

sympathizing and devoted family. What is needed in such cases is a doctor who sympathizes with the family which is the victim of her cravings rather than with her and who removes her to a different atmosphere where, with every real attention to her physical needs, her moral cultivation will be attended to as well, sympathy be replaced by cool-headed, shrewd understanding, and gradual education lift her to a point where she will be able to see for herself how unwholesome her environment has been, how opposite to curative the treatment she has demanded and received.

From this and the previous chapters' utterance on self-control, it will be seen that in my belief expressing excessive feeling, demanding excessive indulgence and over-considera-

tion by the family, too much caressing and fussing, in short, coddling, are great factors in the manufacture or increase of many nervous illnesses. A desire for dramatic effect often urges patients, even children, to overstate their symptoms and sometimes, if the expected result is not secured, to invent them. If this sort of untruth—the falsehood of a sick mind, not a moral fault—is suspected or recognized, the best tone to take is one of calm, matter-of-fact acceptance. Every actor needs an audience and a sympathetic one to do his best; if there is no audience, there will be no play.

Vampire Patients

There is another kind of patient, worse in some ways than the one who seeks an unwholesome kind or quantity of sympathy, because more diffi-

cult to deal with. I know of no phrase to describe her. I know of no means of accounting for her effect on those about her, nor is there any description of her in the medical books, though nurses and doctors know the type sadly well.

This is the woman who, with or without special demands for sympathy or consideration, "takes it out" of every one near, seeming to absorb strength and vitality from those about her to their detriment yet not to her gain. She is always a chronic invalid, she may be young or old, agreeable or disagreeable, attractive or the reverse, her qualities seem to have no share in the effect. An ordinary quarter hour's visit to her leaves you exhausted, squeezed dry. She uses up nurses like a machine grinding material. One sees charm-

ing people of this sort, intellectual, cultivated, with lively sympathies of their own, who are perfectly unable to appreciate their peculiar influence upon others and in spite of agreeable conversation, quick comprehension and active intelligence, one looks forward with dread to the necessary visit.

The two worst of the kind I remember were of very contrasting sorts; the one, like those just described, had both physical and mental attractions, was unselfish so far as her intentions went, amiable, and every way socially desirable.

The other was an uninteresting, ordinary-looking, middle aged woman of irritable temper, neither cultivated nor agreeable, though the kind of willing invalid who gets herself up with care for the doctor's visit and

"enjoys ill health." She had a long-suffering husband who had nearly reached his limit of endurance and she had worn out several friendly or related care-takers. She was full of cravings for sympathy and appreciation and told pathetic stories of imaginary woes in the most restrained and subdued fashion—but besides this and quite apart from it, she had the most astonishingly exhausting effect on every one about her. Nurses gave out after two or three weeks of service and retired to their beds to recuperate. An unimaginative Scotchwoman who gave her massage said that she went away from the bedside every day "like a wet rag" and had on several occasions burst into quite causeless tears on her way to her next engagement. As this lady had no disease except imaginary ones she

proved naturally very difficult to treat. Steady and persistent forcing and unrelenting discipline put her on her unwilling feet at last, at a terrible cost in nervous energy expended by nurses and physicians. As she had no desire to be well or active, she probably relapsed again—and the efforts to cure her were wasted. No suggestion I have heard made accounts satisfactorily for these cases and their curious personal influence on others.

Value of Sympathy

Finally it must be repeated that what has been said is not intended to deprecate the importance and value of sympathy and loving devotion in illness, but rather to warn against the bad results attendant upon the abuse of such feelings and to indicate how

they may be well and wisely used to help instead of to hinder; nor if much has been made of the selfishness and cowardice of too many nervous invalids does that prevent the heartiest recognition of the extraordinary courage and calm determination not to yield to the demoralizing effect of pain and wretchedness one is permitted sometimes to see; only, it *is* necessary to sound a warning against weak yielding to the blows of circumstance; the resistance of the strong soul wins prompt acknowledgement and every one who sees the brave defense hastens with help to bring new weapons, to sharpen the old ones, to strike a blow on the side of the one who means never to give up the fight, but to say

"It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul."

VII.

Religion and Nervousness—Treatment of Nervous Diseases by Clergy—Reasons for their Frequent Failure to Help—Emmanuel Church Movement—Truthfulness—Doctors and Patients—Conclusions.

Those who have read thus far will it is hoped have drawn for themselves the conclusion that, for the treatment or prevention of those minor degrees of nervousness which have been the subjects of our discourse, economy of nervous expenditure is a central and vital element, whether the treatment is conducted by the victim herself or by a physician. It is to this end that counsels about physical life, food, hours, rest, self-control, the doing away with over-consideration of self, and the suppression of emotional manifestations all tend.

Helpful Religion

An old friend criticises these articles for omitting the mention of higher means of help than these;—I quote her because she is an authority, and has herself for many years been the stern mistress of an hysterical and fantastically irritable nervous system that, less strictly and consistently ruled, would long since have consigned her to an invalid's couch, in place of the active helpful life she has led. She is well aware, she says, "that nervous women must learn-self-control, a willingness to bear suffering, a great unwillingness to incommode others. For strength to do this should they not be pointed to the promises of Christianity? It is only in religion honestly believed and bravely lived up to that sure help can finally be found." Another letter

supplies a further text, though this is from a man, a clergyman, who writes, "I want to ask you whether Christian people—of the real sort—are or are not more exempt from nervous prostration than others?" These two letters suggest some discourse upon the relations of religion, in belief and in observance, to nervous suffering and upon the ways in which ministers of religion can aid the nervous. To the first letter the reply must surely be an unqualified "Yes" and it would be hard to put into better words than the writer's the essence of the whole subject.

Let us look at the general aspects of the matter and then consider in more detail the treatment of nervous diseases by clergymen, its limitations and the proper places where the minister may intervene with hope of helpfulness.

The neurologist sees folk of all religions, Christians and Jews, infidels and heretics, and once they have become nervous there is little choice among them. Perhaps by the time the doctor sees them, it is already too late to make practical application of beliefs that, properly used at the proper time, might have saved them.

Failure of Ministers

If the sufferer or her friends could see that there is an early stage at which a minister capable of wise use of the opportunity should be able to halt her downward career, much good might be done and much illness and unhappiness prevented. But while patients will usually tell their doctors and sometimes their friends of their fears, apprehensions, doubts and obsessions they seem unwilling to

consult a spiritual adviser or do not recognize the need of one or the happy moment for his intervention, until the time and the chance have passed. I fear that one reason for this may lie in the fact that they so seldom get the aid and comfort they might expect from the church. In many years of observation of all kinds and degrees of nervous and mental ailments, it has not been my good fortune to get much assistance for my patients from the ministers of their several forms of faith. Some people, especially those with the milder kinds of mental depression or afflicted with that malady of indecision so often spoken of in these pages, beg for counsel from their pastors. Such instances are most suitable for clerical interposition and may be called selected cases,

and when the adviser has been called I have always been careful to lay the history before him and to leave him free to act as seemed to him best. In the result harm has been done to the patient's mental state quite as often as good. Nor can I recall a single cure effected by these means at this period. There must be reasons for such a general want of success. Certainly any faith that holds a belief in the infinite goodness and love of God ought to be helpful to one who is worried, assailed with doubts of self and other things, anxious, self-tormented and depressed. The minister of whatever sect should be able to assist in guiding wandering and unsteady feet upon the right path and helping them on their way. Some of the reasons for failure can doubtless be found in the mind or in the

very disease of the sufferers; some of them in the personality, position or equipment of the adviser. For one thing the absolute and unquestioned authority once held by the minister is no longer his or at least is not his in the Protestant sects and this naturally tells against him in cases in which it is so necessary to direct certain things to be done or left undone. In the Roman Church the power of the priest gives his least word great weight, and he has usually also the advantage of a very intimate acquaintance with the conditions, physical, spiritual and temporal of his flock, so that his advice or command is not only strengthened by his ability to enforce it but founded upon better personal knowledge of all the circumstances. The Roman clergyman is thus often more successful as an

adviser for he is able to command obedience where other ministers can only try to get it.

Want of Faith

Yet another reason is the attitude of mind of the sufferers themselves. They are often most unwilling, sometimes probably unable, to see how wrong living or want of faith can have had anything to do with their predicament. They have been so accustomed to hear of the goodness of God they could never bring themselves to Job's point of view—"Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil also?" Neither would they see the force and strength of such an exhortation as Phillips Brooks' "Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men! Do not pray for tasks equal to your

powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks!"

These excuses apply especially to those which I have called selected cases—ones, that is, which would be held particularly suitable for and likely to be helped by religious advice and advisers. Apart from these there is a very large class of nervous patients, probably a majority of all those afflicted with disease of strictly neurasthenic type, in whom there exists a real physical basis for their trouble, which cannot be removed or altered by belief or faith or good advice unless certain bodily changes take place also, notably an improvement in nutrition. It is necessary to recognize this and not to be misled by a change of labels. The treatment of hysteria for example is not much furthered by calling it "a dissociation of per-

sonality," nor does such a phrase in any way tend to lessen the general ignorance of the real character of the malady or help any one to recognize the fact that hysteria (as distinguished from hysterics) is as clearly a *disease* as pneumonia and is not a creation of the physician's or the patient's fancy. Secondly, there are the born neurasthenics, who have imperfect nervous systems, whom no man can make whole. Lastly it has to be remembered that sometimes what even to the careful and instructed student of nervous diseases appears to be but a moderately severe neurasthenia proves in the end to have been the nervous state preceding grave mental disorder. Not even the largest experience can always make a true estimate of these three conditions at first sight so it cannot be hoped that

sympathy and inexperience will be able to do so.

This brings us to the very difficult consideration of the fitness and ability of clergymen not simply to help the physician with nervous cases but to undertake their direction themselves, a matter now claiming much attention. Even supposing that they do not strike the impossible ones just mentioned but taking it for granted that the time is favorable and the case suitable have they generally speaking the equipment to deal with them?

Why Ministers Fail

I hope I shall be understood to speak with all respect and without prejudice in expressing very grave doubts of the *general capacity* of clergymen for doing this. Too often

even when informed beforehand of the character of the disease the clergyman does not seem able to differentiate between unhappiness or disturbance of mind caused by genuine religious doubts—a subject proper for his consideration—and the self-tormenting of persons obsessed by a fixed idea of sin or of crime or by mere vague formless doubt. The danger involved in this inability lies in the fact that such ideas may be preliminary symptoms of insanity or of some serious nervous disease of organic origin and that to attempt to help by religious advice, exhortations or explanations would be not simply waste of time and energy but would seriously lessen the patient's chances of recovery by putting off indefinitely long the absolutely needed medical treatment.

Qualifications Necessary

It is not to be supposed that a minister should be able unaided to make these nice psychic distinctions unless he has had an experience of life of a kind he can seldom have had, have taken a course or two in pathologic psychology and studied for a few years in a nervous clinic. A physician is not expected to make a differential diagnosis between smallpox and chicken-pox by book learning alone, but the minister, ignorant of the treatment of physical ailments, whose very conditions of life and work are all too apt to set him apart from intimate contact as a man among men with men's temptations and sufferings and doubts, is expected to be ready to recognize and treat on sight all cases of soul-

sickness.* Many and many doctors will be found refusing to attempt the handling of such conditions and confessing freely that neither their inclinations nor their experience has fitted them for such undertakings, but the clergyman with his heart full of good intentions and with a little pamphlet from Boston in his hand proposes himself as sufficiently equipped to tackle any of them. Where one minister, naturally and by study and experience fitted for such work, succeeds, hundreds have failed and will fail and in failing will postpone or make more difficult, perhaps even impossible, a future cure.

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* Of course this will be thought untrue by ministers who probably do not know themselves that men not only speak a different language in a minister's presence from the one they ordinarily use, but even speak in a different voice.

The standard of knowledge and experience suggested is no doubt a high, perhaps an impossibly high one, nor would I be understood to assert that such attainments are common among doctors and absent among clergymen. It is only claimed that the doctor even if not thoroughly fitted in every way is able to judge better of his own ability or inability to handle such matters and knows better what his own limitations are.

Emmanuel Plan

It is for these reasons among others that the Emmanuel method seems to me undesirable or impracticable for most ministers to attempt, however successful in the hands of its originators. Very few are to be found possessed like Dr. Worcester of judgment, tact, insight into men, acquaint-

ance with psychic processes and above all with a large human interest, as weapons, and terrible damage may follow the use of such instruments by men moved only by enthusiasm without knowledge.

Dangers of Hypnotism

The greatest danger of all is the use of hypnotism in any form or degree, a two-edged sword, capable indeed of usefulness but more capable of harm. After years of study, beginning with too easy an approval of it, hypnotism whether called by that name or by the unsuitable one of " suggestion " has been laid aside by the medical profession as a means too dangerous for ordinary use, involving great risk of deterioration of character in the subject if often repeated, and putting a terribly tempting tool

in the hands of the user, fascinating in the ease with which it can produce superficial and temporary good results and equally capable of being used for harmful ones.

A susceptible person, once hypnotized, is more and more easily thrown into the hypnotic state until even the slightest hint suffices to bring about the condition. It is not necessary for the hypnotization to go so far as deep sleep; this more advanced stage is indeed seldom required, and to say that persons are not hypnotized because they are not put into a sleep or a trance shows ignorance of the subject.

I am not asserting that very slight degrees of the hypnotic condition are as dangerous as the deeper, but I do say that all degrees of it are dangerous to the integrity and healthy action

of the subject's nervous system. The danger of harm increases with every repetition of the hypnotization.

In "suggestible," that is, over-susceptible, individuals, who are almost universally neurotic persons, to fix the eyes on a small point, especially a bright one, sometimes even to fix the mind on the one idea of going into the hypnotic state (mild or deep), is enough without further intervention from any one, to put them into that state.

In the report of one lecture on the Emmanuel method by one of its most distinguished exponents, the statement was made that a "crystal ball" was given the subject to look at merely "to fix his attention." This is one of the very oldest methods of hypnotism, and one of the surest,

especially easy and especially dangerous.*

Forms of Faith and Nervousness

Before leaving the subject of the relation of religion to nervousness there remains the delicate matter of the influence of different sects, suggested or involved in the question of the second correspondent quoted at the beginning of the chapter. One

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* Within a few hours of writing the above paragraphs an article by Dr. A. L. Benedict of Buffalo, a physician of distinction, came into my hands from which I quote his opinion upon hypnotism and the Emmanuel method:

"The Emmanuel Church movement seems to the writer especially dangerous because of the eminent respectability and intelligence in non-medical matters of its advocates. . . . Its dangers are two-fold: first, its practitioners, the clergy and perhaps the lay members—lay in both ecclesiastic and medical sense—openly declare their intention to practise hypnotism in suitable cases. Hypnotism should never be practised except by an experienced physician, and then only in exceptionally favorable cases. The individual who has been hypnotized has lost just so

interesting comment can be made upon this, besides what has been already said.

Although it is a mere impression and one from the nature of the case not capable of documentary or statistical proof, I am inclined to think that those communions in which ceremonial observances are strictly enforced, with hours for prayer, set times for meditation and so on, furnish less

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much of his independent mental life. . . . Every seance increases his susceptibility. It is a serious matter to allow influence to supplant conscious intelligence, and it is no imaginary fear that seduction, crime, and undue control may follow. . . .

"Secondly, psychotherapy, especially when practised by an enthusiast, whether a physician or not, is bound to be applied to cases in which an organic disease is overlooked. . . .

"In plain words, this means that even a competent physician cannot unerringly exclude organic disease, at least not at one or a few examinations. . . . It is obviously impossible to apply to the clientele of such a method even the moderately rigorous methods of a life-insurance examiner."—*The Therapeutic Gazette*, Sept., 1908.

than their due quota of nervous patients. According to one's individual belief this may be considered as an effect of religion or may be attributed to the fact that as a consequence of the necessity for carrying out these duties at exact moments there is a sort of approach to the schedule plan of life I have recommended for the nervous, with a resulting improved mental and moral equilibrium. It is certainly true that considering as examples two such widely separated forms of religious belief as the Orthodox Jews and the strict Roman Catholics, one does not see as many patients from them as from their numbers might be expected, especially when it is remembered that Jews as a whole are a very nervous people and that the Roman Church in this country includes among its mem-

bers numbers of the most emotional race in the world.

Of only one sect can I recall no example. It is not in my memory that a professing Quaker ever came into my hands to be treated for nervousness. If the opinion I have already stated so often is correct, namely that want of control of the emotions and the over-expression of the feelings are prime causes of nervousness, then the fact that discipline of the emotions is a lesson early and constantly taught by Friends, would help to account for the infrequency of this disorder among them and add emphasis to the belief in such a causation.

Truthfulness

One more letter I quote with some alarm. The writer is a woman, it should be said, an experienced invalid

of twenty years' standing, full of courage still. She informs me that it "ought to be strongly said that if women were more truthful there would be less nervous breakdowns."

No mere man would dare to make such an assertion in such a form, though some part of what was said in the last chapter bears upon this subject. One may venture to imagine that the writer probably meant to imply something wider and deeper than the ordinary superficial sense of the word truthful. Truth does not consist solely or wholly in the exact statement of bare physical fact; an exact statement may often be untrue, and at best is but the raw material of truthfulness. It is surely something higher and more important than this that she would seem to intend. She would forbid the worship

of false standards of life, permit no sham emotions, and thus prevent the deterioration of character, will and intellect inevitably resulting from these forms of falsehood.

"Veracity to sentiment, truth in a relation, truth to your own heart and your friends, never to feign or falsify emotion—that is the truth which makes love possible and mankind happy."

One of the real difficulties in the erection and maintenance of such a standard is the deep rooted immemorial prejudice of women in favor of the surface of things which causes them to value always the appearance above the reality, to snatch at the shadow and leave the substance.

If truthfulness in a high sense requires us not to exaggerate or pretend feelings it must surely be desirable

that we should aid others to practise the like virtues by not craving from them pity that cannot be all and always genuine, nor demanding a constant lively sympathy that must be mostly words.

To suffer and be strong, alone, is a hard saying, a counsel of perfection, indeed, and not to be expected from poor human nature, but it is better to aim at that mark than to sit effortless and whining, content to be discontented, with no desire much higher than to astonish with new symptoms spectators whose admiration is subsidized beforehand by affection.

Perhaps a philosopher might tell us that in this enterprise, as in the larger aspects of life, there can be no such thing as success, and that only self-deception will be satisfied; at least one can but try, and to try

and keep trying will maintain one's self-respect, whatever else is lost.

Self Help

Endeavor then not to talk of yourself and your sickness any more than is absolutely necessary. Put them from you—hold them at arm's length and if you need incentive to silence remember once for all that, even if your friends listen politely, they are not really interested, or at best no more than for one or two hearings; whatever they may say, however they may appear, they are bored, perhaps disgusted. Sometimes one is almost ready to say that the continual display of sick emotions is an immodest exposure of the feelings.

How to Get Nervous

Still more determined, if you are nervous yourself, should be your

stand against letting others talk of their miseries to you. Even the healthy cannot bear the continual presentation of disease to them without liability to imaginary infection therefrom. A professor in a medical school can always tell what stage of study the undergraduates have reached by the stories of the lads who come to consult him, quite convinced that they have heart disease, appendicitis, or consumption, the malady depending upon the subjects of the most recent lectures.

The same influence is constantly seen where the common meeting rooms of a hospital or sanitarium gave opportunity for this interchange; no rules or regulations will stop it, because rules will not lessen the amount of "human nater" in man, or in woman either. The in-

evitable result is that one presently finds symptoms have been quite successfully swapped, the most nervous and apprehensive patients securing the largest share, but each acquiring a few from the other invalids, according to the individual capacity for the absorption and reproduction of the disorders described.

It does not follow from all this that you should never speak to any one of your ailments—only that you should select the person and the time. It is certainly true that to tell one's troubles is often a help and a relief; but tell them once, not repeatedly, whether to friend or physician, secure the advice you need, take it if you are able to take advice, for which few are strong enough, and then hold your tongue, remembering that the most exciting story grows

dull by repetition, and that the effect of

> A thrice-told tale
> Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man

is not what you want to produce.

When you are confessing tell your doctor everything—once! Best treat your doctor as a doctor, too: it is not necessary, it may even be undesirable, that he should be a friend. Professional understanding and a reasonable amount of imagination will suffice to put him in your place, enough at any rate for comprehension of "the case."

By all means get if you can the honest opinion of a disinterested person as to how much attention you should pay to your symptoms and which of them would be better for a little wholesome neglect, but if you ask the same question of each new-

hatched, unfledged acquaintance the only certain consequence must be confusion of mind and may be possibly disaster.

Final

The preventives of nervousness are a sound body, a healthy mind, and a wholesome life. With these, barring accidents and inherited deficiencies, you should not grow nervous. If you have become so, the sooner it can be taken in hand the better. Nervousness can be lessened, and in time to a great degree abolished, by a regulated life of healthy activity and properly varied interests, and by dealing instantly on their appearance with certain symptoms like chronic indecision, difficulty of attention, and too easy fatigue. Taken early, these can be stopped; allowed to increase to

their fullest growth, they possess their victim's life and being to such an extent that nothing is left but a strong course in a physician's hands —or a more or less cheerful resignation to the loss of the greater part of what is best in life.

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